JAMES F. FISHER, EDITOR

Himalayan Anthropology

MOUTON

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Recognition that the Himalayas comprise an area of substantial theoretical interest has crept up on anthropologists gradually, and as a consequence little methodological or conceptual attention has previously been focused on what kinds of analytical apparatus can best deal with the region. Typical definitional problems which characterize any attempt to carve up the real world, geographically or socially, are compounded by the Himalayan position straddling the border of two of the world's major cultural areas: South Asia and Central Asia. The peripheries of these enormous, complex regions meet, combine, and collide in the nooks and crannies of the world's highest mountain mass. This stocktaking volume brings together a wide variety of papers, most of which treat the Himalayas as an interstitial, neither fish nor fowl, contact zone between these two regions; hence the subtitle: the Indo-Tibetan interface. The contributors include anthropologists, political scientists, linguists, sociologists, and students of comparative religion, from western countries, as well as Japan, Nepal, India, and Tibet. Since most scholars tend to work one side of the mountains more than the other, the volume is divided into four parts. The first includes articles which discuss general issues that touch on the area as a whole. The second deals with groups or topics which fall primarily with the South Asian tradition. The third part consists of papers dealing largely with Central Asian concerns. And the fourth part focuses on the Newars of Nepal, who in many ways exemplify the syncretistic nature of the Himalayas.

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Himalayan Anthropology

World Anthropology

General Editor

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Himalayan Anthropology

The Indo-Tibetan Interface

Editor

JAMES F. FISHER

MOUTON PUBLISHERS · THE HAGUE · PARIS

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General Editor's Preface

For purposes of teaching and for curating, the peoples and cultures of the world have traditionally been divided by continents — Europe, Asia, Africa, Oceania, America — and subcontinents — North, East, West or Southern Africa, or South or Southeast Asia, or the Middle East, or Mesoamerica. For purposes of research, however, we usually begin in much smaller areas — parts of nations, language groups, or even local communities — and extend our purview in the directions and as far as needed to provide context for problems in which we are interested. We may eventually return to a continental perspective, or even one that is worldwide. With the growth of knowledge, subcontinental areas are being replaced by others which are smaller or which cut across them or are interesting in other ways. Thus we now look at areas around a sea, like the Mediterranean or the Caribbean or the whole Pacific ocean; or around the North Pole; or along a mountain range like the Andes; or across vast deserts and/or grasslands; or along natural or political borders, such as in the present case where colleagues look from all directions at the Himalayas. Although each scholar develops a particular thesis, together they provide a general perspective for Himalayan studies. Many also faced one another for the first time in a Congress designed to bring new perspectives to Anthropology.

Like most contemporary sciences, anthropology is a product of the European tradition. Some argue that it is a product of colonialism, with one small and self-interested part of the species dominating the study of the whole. If we are to understand the species, our science needs substantial input from scholars who represent a variety of the world's cultures. It was a deliberate purpose of the IXth International Congress of Anthropological and Ethnological Sciences to provide impetus in this direction. The *World Anthropology* volumes, therefore, offer a first

glimpse of a human science in which members from all societies have played an active role. Each of the books is designed to be self-contained; each is an attempt to update its particular sector of scientific knowledge and is written by specialists from all parts of the world. Each volume should be read and reviewed individually as a separate volume on its own given subject. The set as a whole will indicate what changes are in store for anthropology as scholars from the developing countries join in studying the species of which we are all a part.

The IXth Congress was planned from the beginning not only to include as many of the scholars from every part of the world as possible, but also with a view toward the eventual publication of the papers in high-quality volumes. At previous Congresses scholars were invited to bring papers which were then read out loud. They were necessarily limited in length; many were only summarized; there was little time for discussion; and the sparse discussion could only be in one language. The IXth Congress was an experiment aimed at changing this. Papers were written with the intention of exchanging them before the Congress, particularly in extensive pre-Congress sessions; they were not intended to be read aloud at the Congress, that time being devoted to discussions — discussions which were simultaneously and professionally translated into five languages. The method for eliciting the papers was structured to make as representative a sample as was allowable when scholarly creativity — hence self-selection — was critically important. Scholars were asked both to propose papers of their own and to suggest topics for sessions of the Congress which they might edit into volumes. All were then informed of the suggestions and encouraged to rethink their own papers and the topics. The process, therefore, was a continuous one of feedback and exchange and it has continued to be so even after the Congress. The some two thousand papers comprising *World Anthropology* certainly then offer a substantial sample of world anthropology. It has been said that anthropology is at a turning point; if this is so, these volumes will be the historical direction-markers.

As might have been foreseen in the first post-colonial generation, the large majority of the Congress papers (82 percent) are the work of scholars identified with the industrialized world which fathered our traditional discipline and the institution of the Congress itself: Eastern Europe (15 percent); Western Europe (16 percent); North America (47 percent); Japan, South Africa, Australia, and New Zealand (4 percent). Only 18 percent of the papers are from developing areas: Africa (4 percent); Asia-Oceania (9 percent); Latin America (5 percent). Aside from the substantial representation from the U.S.S.R. and the nations of Eastern Europe, a significant difference between this corpus of written material and that of other Congresses is the addition of the large proportion of contributions from Africa, Asia, and Latin America. "Only 18

percent" is two to four times as great a proportion as that of other Congresses; moreover, 18 percent of 2,000 papers is 360 papers, 10 times the number of "Third World" papers presented at previous Congresses. In fact, these 360 papers are more than the total of *all* papers published after the last International Congress of Anthropological and Ethnological Sciences which was held in the United States (Philadelphia, 1956).

The significance of the increase is not simply quantitative. The input of scholars from areas which have until recently been no more than subject matter for anthropology represents both feedback and also long-awaited theoretical contributions from the perspectives of very different cultural, social, and historical traditions. Many who attended the IXth Congress were convinced that anthropology would not be the same in the future. The fact that the next Congress (India, 1978) will be our first in the "Third World" may be symbolic of the change. Meanwhile, sober consideration of the present set of books will show how much, and just where and how, our discipline is being revolutionized.

The reader of the present book will be interested in others in this series which describe the peoples and cultures of large geographical areas and/or long ranges of time, as well as those which provide theory to make understandable both the remarkable variations in human behavior and their surprising recurrences!

Chicago, Illinois SOL TAX
July 28, 1978

Foreword

The Himalayas are a region traversed by three of the major linguistic, racial, and cultural dividing lines of Asia. In the valleys of this great mountain range Indo-Aryan and Tibeto-Burman languages dovetail and overlap, populations of Caucasian racial features characteristic of North India met and merged with Mongoloid ethnic groups, and the two great Asian religions Hinduism and Buddhism coexist there and interact in various ways, In neither of these spheres are boundaries clear-cut, nor are the sequences of events which brought about the present kaleidoscopic pattern easily discernible. While chronological data relating to developments within the great historic civilizations of the area are fairly well established, very little is known about the history of the many preliterate tribal societies which for long filled the interstices between the domains of more advanced cultures.

The involvement of anthropologists in the study of the cultural dimension of the Himalayan region is of relatively recent date, and many parts of that region have been — and indeed still are — virtually inaccessible, the improvements of communications having been offset by political restraints. Fortunately there are periodic shifts in the accessibility of the various areas. While most of the kingdom of Nepal was closed to travelers and scholars at a time when the Indian Himalayas were relatively open, since the early 1950's the position has been reversed and many anthropologists are now flocking to Nepal whereas great persistence and ingenuity are required to gain access to such Indian territories as Arunachal Pradesh. It is inevitable that the configuration and contents of the present volume reflect these limitations to the scope for anthropological research in the Himalayas.

The question raised by James Fisher as to whether the Himalayas should be considered a legitimate unit for anthropological study is at least

partly answered by the fact that high mountains impose on the populations living in their shadow a similar environmental framework of great rigidity. On the one hand mountain ranges undoubtedly act as barriers between ethnic groups, but on the other hand movements and trade are inevitably channeled into a limited number of routes leading through a tangle of high mountains, and this favors close and repeated contacts between the various communities compelled to use the same routes. In lowland country there are no comparable physical features to draw different ethnic groups together.

The role of trade routes in the spread of civilizations is exemplified by the channels through which Tibetan Buddhism penetrated into the Himalayan regions. From Tawang in the eastern Himalayas to places such as Mustang and Taklakot in the west one can observe the concentration of Buddhist communities along major trade routes. Where such routes are lacking — due perhaps to the difficulty of the terrain, such as in the Subansiri region of Arunachal Pradesh — and trade has never been more than a trickle of individual barter transactions, there has been no appreciable infiltration of Tibetan populations and hence no spread of Buddhist cultural traditions.

After the destruction of the Buddhist civilization inside Tibet by Communist China the Himalayan countries have assumed a new and important role as the last refuge of one of the most remarkable creations of the human spirit. Though originally springing from Indian ideology, Tibetan Buddhism has developed its own distinctive way of life, and it is fortunate that though suppressed and partly uprooted in its homeland, this way of life persists among the Tibetan-speaking communities in the Himalayan region. The difference between Tibetan and Indian influence in that region is startling. While the impact of Indian civilization on the indigenous tribal populations has resulted in the adoption of individual elements rather than in their wholesale Hinduization, Mahayana Buddhism has tended to effect in many areas a complete transformation of the local culture pattern. This process occurred in widely separated regions. Thus in western Nepal the Thakalis of the Kali Gandaki Valley, undoubtedly once a preliterate tribal community not very different from Magars and Gurungs, adopted the whole panoply of Tibetan Buddhist culture complete with monasteries and nunneries, and more than 600 miles to the east the Sherdukpen of Arunachal Pradesh similarly exchanged an earlier tribal life-style for a cultural pattern largely modeled on the lines of Tibetan Buddhist civilization. Though in both cases there have been casual contacts with Hindu populations of the lowlands, their influence in cultural and religious matters is not very significant.

Only in the great urban centers of political and economic developments, such as the triad of towns in the Kathmandu Valley, did a far-reaching interpenetration of Buddhist and Hindu culture take place, and

several contributions to this volume deal specifically with the long-standing links between those religions and life-styles. While in Nepal centuries of coexistence have resulted in a harmonious amalgamation of Buddhist and Hindu ideologies and practices, a very different situation has arisen in the neighboring state of Sikkim. Here the relations between the old established Buddhist Sikkimese population and the recently immigrated Nepalis, most of whom are Hindus, assumed the form of competition and confrontation, a struggle which ended with the victory of the Nepali-speaking Hindus, the dethronement of the Buddhist monarch and the incorporation of Sikkim into the Republic of India. There exist as yet no studies of the social and cultural effects of these recent events, and non-Indian scholars are unlikely to obtain permission to undertake such research.

In Bhutan the indigenous Buddhist population is still in control of affairs, and apparently determined to avoid the fate of the Sikkimese ruling class. The numerous Nepali immigrants are confined to the lowlands and foothills, and the higher valleys remain bulwarks of traditional Mahayana Buddhism and a cultural life which owes its inspiration almost entirely to Tibet.

The Himalayan regions to the east of Bhutan are in large part still blank on the ethnographic map, and they are likely to remain so unless Indian anthropologists, the only scholars able to move freely throughout the border areas, make determined efforts to record the complex pattern of diverse tribal cultures and isolated Buddhist colonies whose traditional links with Tibet have been severed by recent political events.

A visit to the Subansiri District of Arunachal Pradesh in 1978 — made possible by an exceptional and greatly appreciated relaxation of the ban on foreign scholars on the part of the Government of India — convinced me both of the magnitude of the tasks awaiting anthropologists in this region as well as of the urgency of research among tribal societies caught up in a process of rapid transformation. The extent and speed of modernization among tribes such as the Apa Tanis is probably without parallel in the Indian subcontinent, and it is to be hoped that anthropologists concerned with Himalayan societies will not remain content with recording and analyzing the traditional social structure and cultural life. An entirely new field of research can be opened up by studying the numerous changes that have followed the construction of motorable roads now linking previously isolated areas. Such studies would be of interest not only to scholars but also to the administrators responsible for the development of hillmen only recently drawn into the wider economic framework of modern India.

The papers contained in this volume do not touch upon all aspects of Himalayan anthropology. Yet they represent a cross section of fieldwork, both ongoing and completed, carried out by scholars of diverse

interests using a variety of research methods. Their common focus was not a specific theoretical problem but their interest in a region which for centuries has been a meeting point of distinct races and two of the great civilizations of Asia.

London
May 1978

CHRISTOPH VON FÜRER-HAIMENDORF

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Introduction

JAMES F. FISHER

Almost all of the papers in this volume were originally submitted by participants in the IXth International Congress of Anthropological and Ethnological Sciences held in Chicago during the first week of September 1973. Most of these papers, but by no means all, were responses to a proposal I sent potential contributors, suggesting a symposium to examine the Himalayan interstices between the South and Central Asian areas. A few papers were solicited after the Congress in order to fill in geographical or analytical gaps in the original set.

The hope was that by focusing on the entire region as an interface between two (or more) encompassing traditions, a range of diverse responses could be subsumed within a broad but common theoretical perspective. Placing contributions within larger social and cultural contexts would steer us clear of ethnographic provincialism and make scholarly communication possible for the vast majority of us who tend to work one side of the mountains more than the other. The aim was to be interdisciplinary as well as intercultural. Accordingly, several disciplines outside anthropology, but related in important ways to it, are included.

The range of the responses, once they were all in, turned out to include a number of papers that did not directly confront the interface notion at all. But the scope of the Congress enterprise allowed the inclusion of some of these in this volume, since they constitute important contributions to the burgeoning scholarship of this fringe region. The resulting collection thus draws a chain and compass across the frontier of Himalayan research as it stands in the mid-1970's. The volume therefore represents not so much a coherent point of view as an incompletely realized goal; not a testimonial to "what might have been," but an attempt to provide the beginnings of an analytical framework for this neither-fish-nor-fowl contact zone.

The Himalayas as an anthropological unit seem to have crept up on us gradually, perhaps simply because we who work there feel some intuitive unity to the region. Certainly academic interest in the Himalayas has grown exponentially in recent years. A spate of scholarly organizations, symposia, and new journals devoted to this area has appeared in the 1970's, in the Himalayan countries themselves as well as in Japan and the West. Yet we have so far given very little methodological or conceptual attention to discussing what kinds of theory or analytical apparatus can best deal with this region. It is a good time for stocktaking.

Part of the difficulty is that there is no consensus among Himalayanists — or in social science generally, for that matter — concerning what attributes best characterize a region. Regions can be marked out along a number of axes: geographical, of course, but more interestingly for our purposes, historical, linguistic, political, cultural, structural, ecological — even psychological. Berreman states in his paper that the Himalayas are for some purposes and by some criteria a region, for other purposes and criteria part of a region, and by still other standards, a mountainous composite of many regions. The size and nature of a region then become determined by the problem at hand — an awkward, side-stepping solution, which nevertheless is acceptable as a rough-and-ready first approximation to be subsequently refined. The heterogeneity of these papers reflects these concerns.

Typical definitional problems which characterize any attempt to carve up the real world, geographically or socially, are compounded by the Himalayan position straddling the border of two of the world's major cultural areas: South and Central Asia. The peripheries of these enormous, complex regions meet, combine, and collide in the nooks and crannies of the world's highest mountain mass. The Himalayas, thus, are not so much a boundary, border, or buffer, as a zipper which stitches together these two densely textured cultural fabrics.

The formulation of an "Indo-Tibetan interface" may be more appropriate for some parts of the Himalayas — Nepal, for example — than it is for, say, the more western Himalayas. But even the more fundamental distinction between South and Central Asia — as two sharply divergent cultural entities — is too often tacitly and uncritically accepted. This book does not foreclose the possibility that the Tibetan cultural system is not separate from, but a variant of, the Indian hierarchical tradition. Allen's paper keeps this option open, and ethnographic facts, such as the low rank of blacksmith groups in both traditions, lend it support. But while the contrasts may be overdrawn at times, there does seem to be a consensus that large linguistic, structural, political, and historical cleavages divide the two areas, and these papers illustrate some of the differences.

The organization of the book also reflects these differences. The first

part includes articles which discuss general issues that touch on the area as a whole. The second section deals with groups or topics which fall primarily within the South Asian tradition. The third consists of papers dealing largely with Central Asian concerns. And the fourth part focuses on the Newars of Nepal, who in many ways exemplify the syncretistic nature of the Himalayas.

Because of the wide linguistic spectrum surveyed here, it has not been feasible to standardize the different authors' transliterations and diacritical refinements; instead, each has adopted whatever system best meets the internal needs of each paper.

In conclusion I would like to thank Professor Christoph von Fürer-Haimendorf for so skillfully chairing the symposium and for consenting to write the Foreword.

SECTION ONE

General Issues

Fourfold Classifications of Society in the Himalayas

N. J. ALLEN

> Le Népal c'est l'Inde que se fait. Sur un territoire restreint à souhait comme un laboratoire l'observateur embrasse commodément la suite des faits qui de l'Inde primitive ont tiré l'Inde moderne.
>
> S. Lévi, *Le Népal*, volume I, p. 28

Many societies differ from those to which anthropologists usually belong in possessing a single generally accepted picture of themselves as wholes made up of a fixed number of related component parts. It is with such "folk models," specifically with those having four components, that this paper is concerned. Often the unambiguous picture is located in the distant past, and it is not necessarily clear to the users of the model exactly how it should be applied to the contemporary world that they experience. This question, and the relationship between indigenous model and outsiders' view of the society, will be largely left to one side. The object is to use ethnographic material from contemporary Nepalese peoples to cast light on the long-term cultural history of India (for a comparable undertaking, compare Fürer-Haimendorf 1953). Even if the particular historical hypothesis suggested is unacceptable, a comparative approach to the subject raises questions that others may be able to attack more successfully.

Like most of the other Mongoloid peoples of Nepal, the Rai have been

The field research (July 1969–March 1971) was supported by the Social Science Research Council, the preparatory thesis (Allen 1969) by the Nuffield Foundation. I should like to acknowledge my gratitude to these bodies, to my respective supervisors, Professor C. von Fürer-Haimendorf and Dr. R. Needham, and to Dr. A. Macfarlane (of Cambridge University) for permission to use unpublished findings.

(*Note added in proof*: Five years after it was first written, this paper would ideally need considerable rewriting to take account of recent reports and analyses.)

under strong and increasing Hindu influence for at least two centuries, but it is conventional and convenient to refer to them as "tribes," in contradistinction to "castes," whose native language is Nepali. The Rai speak a considerable number (probably well over a dozen) of mutually incomprehensible and little-studied Tibeto-Burman languages which form a group fairly remote from Tibetan itself. Thulung is one of these languages, and all its speakers share a tradition of having originated from the village of Mukli where most of my period of fieldwork was spent. I was told here that in very early times the village was made up of only four groups ("protoclans").[1] Their names are included in the list of some fifteen contemporary clans represented in the village, but they do not nowadays enjoy any special status by virtue of their antiquity (which indeed was not widely known). Their names and functions, in the order my informant gave them, were as follows:

1. Cəsang, the protoclan (*khāl*) of Ramli Raja. The name Ramli refers both to the mythical founding ancestor of the Thulung and to a "king" (more likely a telescoped dynasty of petty chiefs) who must have reigned before the incorporation of the area into the state of Nepal in the early 1770's.
2. Kesti, the protoclan of ministers or advisers (*mantri*).
3. Tharle, the protoclan responsible for agricultural fertility rites (*bhume pujā*) (Allen 1976a). In Mukli the chief officiant (*muldhāmi*) in these rites still belongs to this clan.
4. Toliumde, the servants (*gothālā*, literally "cowherds") of the Tharle. Evidently the protoclans fall into two pairs; kings and their servants, priests and theirs. Now the river that gives the village its ritual name bisects the old part of Mukli into two parts; Congkom to the west, Tekala to the east. In principle, all clans are supposed to belong to one or the other division, and although the social and territorial dichotomies no longer coincide precisely, there is no doubt as to the allocation of the protoclans (see Figure 1).

All the evidence suggests that at the time of the protoclans, Mukli (which now takes three hours to cross) was quite a small settlement, isolated amid large tracts of uninhabited, jungle-clad hills. A legend recorded in several versions tells of the rupture of intermarriage with the Bahing, a day's walk to the south. These are the closest neighbors of the Thulung, linguistically, and at the time may well have been so geographically and socially. It is very likely, then, that Mukli was once endogamous, a supposition that would help to account for the distinctness of the Thulung language. There is no direct evidence on the rules of intermarriage among the protoclans — few Thulung are interested in their tribal

[1] The term, borrowed from Oppitz (1968), will be applied to the "original" components of societies supposed once to have been quadripartite. For the purposes of this paper, all hereditary categories can be taken as patrilineal (but cf. Note 7).

past — but on general grounds it seems highly plausible that Congkom and Tekala were originally exogamous moieties. Just such a dual organization, both as regards territory and (in principle) kinship, is well exemplified by the endogamous and linguistically isolated Tibeto-Burman-speaking village of Malana in Kulu (Rosser 1956).

In Figure 1 the protoclan of the priests' servants has been placed on a lower level than that of the kings' servants on two grounds. The term "cowherd" has a less honorific ring to it than "minister," and the founder of the protoclan is said to have been an outsider who fell in love with a Tharle girl and settled in Mukli. In Nepal generally, as in Tibet (Stein 1972:98), the married-in son-in-law is regarded as little better than a slave. It is arguable that the protoclan of Ramli, which goes back to the earliest mythological times well before the foundation of Mukli, belongs on a higher level than that of the priests, whose cult (according to oral tradition) was introduced from the north at a period subsequent to the foundation of the village.

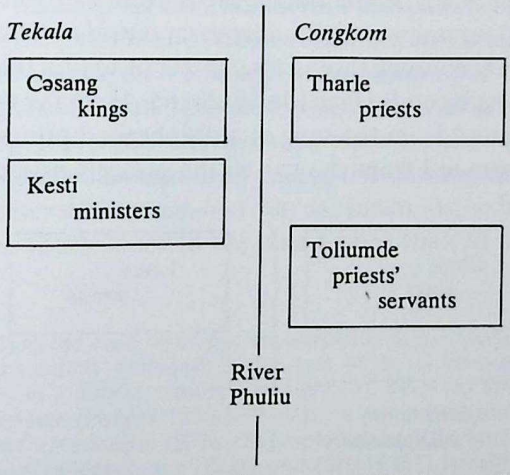

Figure 1. Original social structure of the first permanent Thulung settlement according to oral tradition

The Gurung of mid-west Nepal are divided into two strata. Among the lower, usually called the "Sixteen Clans" (Solahjat or Sorajat), there is no evidence of any four-by-four grouping, and the significance (if any) of the number is uncertain; an older name is probably the "Nine Clans" (Pignède 1966:179–180). There is evidence suggesting that they may be later arrivals from the north (Macfarlane 1972). The superior stratum is invariably referred to as the "Four Clans" (Carjat), though other ill-defined groups are occasionally included in it. An ostensibly historical document claims that the Carjat were originally Hindus who came from the south and adopted Gurung ways (Macfarlane 1972), but this is probably to be regarded as an example of the common type of myth in

which a Himalayan group tries to raise its status by claiming an origin among the purer Hindus of the south.

The Carjat are in general enumerated in the following order (from Pignède 1966:170–177):

a. Ghale, royalty.

b. Ghotane, according to Gurung tradition "les administrateurs des rois *ghale*."

c. Lama. This is the same word as the Tibetan for priest or monk, having as basic meaning "the upper one, the higher one" (Das 1902 s.v. *blama*), and in the west of the Gurung tract, Buddhist officiants are exclusively from this clan (Pignède 1966:291).

d. Lamechane. Their traditional function is not clear, but it is suggested (Pignède 1966:177) that they were of lower status than the Lama clan.

The pairing off suggested by the names and functions, and by analogy with the Thulung, is confirmed by the ideal rules of intermarriage, which, though often infringed in practice and doubtless subject to local variation, are reported in principle as unambiguous (cf. Figure 2). Recalling that the Thulung priests' servants originated from an outsider, i.e., in a different manner from the remaining three, it is interesting to find that according to one of the Gurung legends (Pignède 1966:165–166), the first three clans in the list originated from the sons of a disinherited prince, whereas the Lamechane originated from the son of the prince's priest.

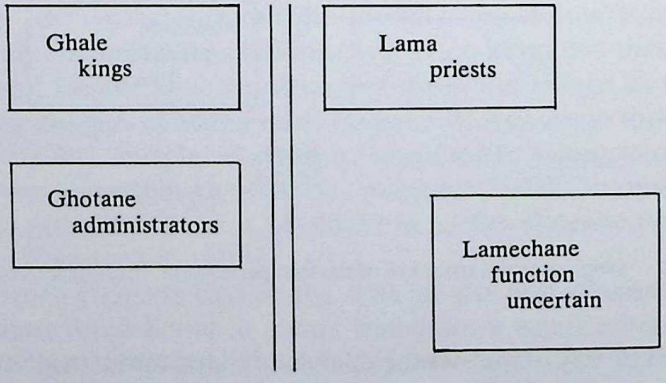

Figure 2. Ideal social structure of contemporary Carjat Gurung. The double line indicates their division into moieties. The displacement of the Lamechane indicates their separate mythical origin (adapted from Pignède 1966:176)

Linguistically the Gurung are closely allied to their neighbors, the Thakali to the west and the Tamang to the east, so closely indeed that there has been preliminary work at the Summer Institute of Linguistics at Kathmandu on the protolanguage from which the three tribal languages have diverged. In lists of the peoples of Nepal the three are ordinarily given as distinct tribes or castes, but in their own language the Gurung

refer to themselves as Tamu-mai (*mai* meaning "people" [Pignède 1966:33]) and to their language as Tamakiu (Ministry of Defence 1965:88), while the Thakali straightforwardly call themselves Tamang (Fürer-Haimendorf 1966:142). In contrast to the Rai, all three have been considerably influenced by Tibetan Buddhism. In view of these three sorts of similarity (to delve no further into the literature), it would be surprising if the three peoples did not hold or had not previously held a common view of the ideal organization of society. There are no detailed monographs as yet on either the Tamang or the Thakali, but all observers agree that the latter group is made up of just four exogamous clans. The Tamang, like the Gurung, are usually described as consisting of a superior and an inferior stratum having numerical names. But more important here is the fact that "according to their own history, the Tamangs originated from four families living at a place called Wuijhang. The four families were Bal, Yonjon, Moktan, and Ghising" (Ministry of Defence 1965:111), names still to be found in the lists of Tamang clans.

Neither for Tamang nor for Thakali (but compare footnote 4 below) is there any definite evidence for traditional functions attaching to clans or protoclans, nor among the Tamang for any grouping of the four into two pairs. Among the Thakali "the preferred cross-cousin marriage system had led to a regular relationship between pairs of clans" (Bista 1971:56). But it should be recalled that even among the Gurung the dual organization is ideal rather than actual, and that the functions, so far as they can be reconstructed, attach more to the clan names than to present-day clan members.[2]

[2] In the interests of the main argument, the discussion of the Thakali-Gurung-Tamang grouping has been greatly simplified. In the east of the Gurung tract the Ghale are sometimes treated as a distinct caste (Höfer 1969:18). They too are said to have been divided into four groups (Pignède 1966:163), or more precisely to consist of "two pairs of intermarrying clans" (Macfarlane 1972). The nomenclature of the whole group, as of other Nepalese peoples and indeed of early Tibetan ones (Stein 1961), is highly confusing. Hindus have naturally conceptualized them in terms of caste organization, Westerners in terms of enduring and bounded "tribes" divided into kindreds. In their turn, the people concerned have felt free to adopt names that connoted higher status in a Hindu context, or that were believed by recruiting officers to be guarantees of desirable military qualities. Outright changes of name are common enough, e.g., Khas to Chetri (almost universal), Bhote to Gurung (Fürer-Haimendorf 1964:25; 1966:156), within the Tamang-Murmi-Lama triad (e.g., Ministry of Defence 1965:111). In addition, names are modified, doubtless in part according to dialect, but also by recourse to folk etymology, the possibilities of which are greatly increased by the availability of Nepali as well as the tribal languages. For the name Thakali, see Kawakita (1957:86–87), Fürer-Haimendorf (1966:147), and Bista (1971:59); it may be added that *thakāli,* given as of Newar origin, means "leader, oldest man of a lineage" (Śarmā 1962 s.v.; further details in Rosser 1966:116–120) or "chief, chieftain" (Turner 1931 s.v. *thākāli*). But the *-āli* here is a suffix (Turner 1931 s.v.), and according to Kawakita (1957:86–87) the people may be referred to as Thak. This is not at all far from Thammai (the *-mai* again being a suffix), which is the form given by Morris (1936:70) as the Gurung term of self-reference. *Tamang* itself is sometimes written *Thamang* (Macdonald 1966:28), and it seems probable that there are relationships between all these names and that of the lowly Thami of east Nepal (cf. Macdonald 1966:42, Note 9; Oppitz 1968:98).

The Thakali-Gurung-Tamang language group is classified as close to Tibetan (Shafer 1955), and it is not unlikely that its early speakers were immigrants from the north. The Sherpa language is even closer to Tibetan, and there is no doubt that the great majority of Sherpas descend from people who migrated south over the Himalayan passes. Whatever reservations one might have about the strict historicity of the documents translated by Oppitz (1968), they establish beyond doubt that the earlier Sherpas conceived of themselves as having been constituted originally by four protoclans; their founders are supposed to have arrived in what is now Nepal more or less simultaneously around 1530. On the basis (mainly) of Oppitz's data, I shall now try to establish the homology suggested in Figure 3 between the four Sherpa protoclans and the four-fold classifications of Carjat Gurung and early Thulung society. The comparison bears only on the function of the components, not on any dual organization, either territorial or in terms of exogamous moieties. I take the protoclans in the order Chakpa, Serwa, Thimmi, and Minyagpa. This is how they are enumerated in the *ruyi,* the most important of the Sherpa historical documents, immediately after the passage into Nepal (Oppitz 1968:46); in other contexts the order is different.

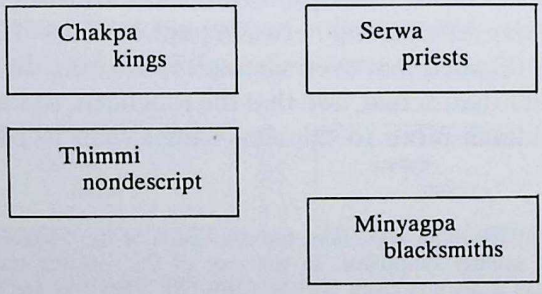

Figure 3. Early Sherpa society with functions of the protoclans as reconstructed from the evidence of Oppitz (1968)

As Oppitz notes (1968:89), there is a formal parallelism between the names of the first two protoclans in that, in contrast to the remaining pair, they refer to metals: Chakpa to *lCags* [iron], Serwa to *gSer* [gold]. In addition, only these two protoclans did not later split into exogamous subclans. The *ruyi* opens with the birth of a Chakpa and concentrates on the doings of that protoclan. This might be discounted as evidence for their preeminence on the grounds that the document purports to be written by a Chakpa (Oppitz 1968:49). On the other hand, one expects the major chronicle of a people to be concerned with those of highest rank. Moreover, it is striking that whereas the funeral rites of members of other clans find no mention in any of the documents, those of the first four members of the Chakpa line are all referred to: royal funerals are well known to have been a major feature of pre-Buddhist Tibetan society.

More suggestive still is the fact that the protector god of the Chakpa clan is the "white iron-ore eagle." Large birds of prey are common enough throughout the world as symbols of royalty, and on the occasion when it first establishes a relationship with the main founding ancestor of the Chakpa clan (its "*eigentlicher Ahn*"), the eagle itself announces its primacy among birds ("*Die gesamte Familie der Vogelgeschwister ist mein Gefolge*"). Before going on this encounter, the ancestor takes his pick from three types of weapons, accoutrements widely associated with warfare in Tibet (Ekvall 1968:90). Presumably the weapons were of iron. Gold is no doubt desirable for tribute such as a priest offers to the gods, but how could a warrior manage without the baser metal? It is significant too that the encounter took place on a tiered mountain; the founder of the Tibetan monarchy descended onto or via just such a mountain (e.g., Stein 1961:12).

For the Serwa the corresponding founding ancestor, Serwa Yeshi Gyeldzen, has as his middle name a word meaning "wisdom," in a ritual or religious sense (Oppitz 1968:36). After the passage into Nepal one of his sons goes on a journey to take special instruction from Lamas and Yogis (Oppitz 1968:46–47). The first major settlement of the protoclan (its "*Kerndorf*") was called Gompashung, with reference to the meditational practices carried on there (Oppitz 1968:85). Under its present Nepali name of Junbesi this village still contains by far the largest village temple (as opposed to monastery) in the whole southern Sherpa area of Solu and Pharak (Funke 1969:92). Funke (1969:29) refers to this clan simply as the most important (*wichtigsten*) of all the Sherpa clans, but does not amplify the remark. In fact, in certain villages the Serwa themselves appeared to Oppitz (1968:86) to enjoy a sense of superiority relative to other Sherpas; in one of them the clan was explicitly stated to be of higher rank (*ranghöher*). The clan name was later compounded to Lamaserwa, and nowadays is often simply Lama, a title whose connotations have been mentioned above. It is true that many Serwa themselves are not aware of enjoying any special status and that other Sherpas apparently do not recognize it. On these grounds Oppitz concludes that the apparently higher standing of the Serwa is a matter of personal authority and prestige based on wealth, not one of ascriptive status. But throughout the culture area we are discussing, claims for the superiority of one's hereditary group cannot be based solely on recent politico-economic achievement, even if this underlies them; they have to be backed up by arguments of a ritual or religious character. It is more plausible, then, to interpret the facts as a lingering survival from the times when the Sherpas were an independent society with an internal ranking system. If further evidence is needed, the major protector god of the Serwa clan is Lu Mu Karma, the White Queen of the Nagas, or Snakes, whose cult is widespread among the Sherpas (Funke 1969:29; cf. Fürer-

Haimendorf 1964:266ff). The Gurung regularly pair the snake, who is king of the earth, with the vulture (corresponding to the Chakpa eagle), who is king of the heavens (Pignède 1966:382).

The name Thimmi is given an anecdotal explanation that holds nothing of obvious relevance for our hypothesis. The documents concerning this protoclan deal mainly with landownership and give no evidence of any particular specialization. It might be worth noting that the ancestor who first crossed into Nepal came in the company of three merchants (Oppitz 1968:60). We are not told of their clan god, and in general they are the most nondescript of the four.

The name Minyagpa refers to an area in northeast Tibet from which the clan founders reputedly originated (Oppitz 1968:80). The important clue is that the members of the oldest subdivision of this protoclan, the Gardzangpa (subclan founder Garawa Tharwa Pö), were blacksmiths until a century and a half ago (Oppitz 1968:56, 83). This occupation is held in at least as low esteem in Tibetan culture as it is in Indian, ostensibly because of the offense it causes to the protector gods of the soil (Ekvall 1964:79). In Mustang, smiths ("the Gara tribe") are classed as even lower than butchers, and like the latter have to live outside the city walls (Peissel 1968:144–145). A little to the south they are again included in the lowest class, the Ma-Gara[3] (Fürer-Haimendorf 1966:156). The emblem (*Wahrzeichen*) of the Minyagpa is the monkey (Funke 1969:12), an animal which occurs characteristically in Tibetan cosmogonies in the stage of human history preceding the institution of government and religion.

This concludes the body of my case for a homology between the fourfold social classifications of the Sherpas, Gurung, and Thulung,[4] but a few minor points may be noted. Thulung clan structure is nowadays surrounded by much uncertainty, but one of the few generally accepted points is that the Toliumde are the eldest of three brother clans: corre-

[3] Cf. the gloss *mgar-wa bshan-pa sogs*, "such as blacksmith, butcher, etc." (Das 1902 s.v. *rigs-ngan* "low extraction or birth"). Roerich (quoted in Bogoslovskij 1972:153) has proposed that the Nepalese tribe called Magar derive their name from the Tibetan for *camp de guerre,* but this is not very plausible. Both in the Thulung area, among the Thakali (Jest 1964–1965) and in the area west of the Thakali where they are traditionally concentrated (Hitchcock 1965), many Magar (or, as they are sometimes called, Mangar), are associated with mining. The differing standing of the name in different areas is not a strong objection, cf. Note 2.

[4] I have not aimed to be exhaustive. The highest stratum of Kathmandu Buddhist society is divided into four "associations" (Rosser 1966:108), and four-brother origin stories are common, e.g., the Limbu Lhasagotra (quoted by Macdonald 1966:44). I have resisted as excessively speculative the temptation to include the Thakali in the homology, using their clan emblems briefly reported by Jest (1964–1965, 1969). However, one cannot fail to compare the Thakali Sercan (emblem: the white lion of the glaciers) with the Sherpa Serwa, especially as *-can* is a suffix. The accepted etymology of *Sherpa* is Tibetan *shar* [east] (Snellgrove 1957:215; Oppitz 1968:49), but one suspects at the very least contamination with the root *Ser-*; spoken Nepali has only one sibilant phoneme.

spondingly, the uncertainty as to the precise number of exogamous units among the Carjat concerns the Lamechane. As already noted, it is only the Thimmi and Minyagpa among the Sherpas who have split into subclans, five and eight respectively. These two accounted for 2,030 of a total of 2,674 present-day protoclan households (Oppitz 1968:102); among the Gurung it was the Ghotane and Lamechane who greatly preponderated numerically in the area studied (Pignède 1966:176–177). There is no evidence among Thulung or Sherpas of the protoclans as a group enjoying any special preeminence corresponding to that of the Carjat relative to the Solahjat. However, Khamba clans founded by migrants from Tibet over the last few generations are definitely of lower status (Fürer-Haimendorf 1964:23ff; Funke 1969:120), and if the same attitude obtained in the past, the homology would be strengthened.

The Sherpa fourfold classification must have come from Tibet, which is a large field of study in which I am not well read. Nevertheless, it is clear (Stein 1961:3) that Tibetan writers generally have conceived of their society as having been made up originally of a small number of "primitive tribes." Where the lists give seven such tribes, one is that of the mother's brother. Where they give six, two are "younger brothers," or "bad families," or perhaps even "slaves" (Stein 1961:68). Again the fourfold classification is basic. One text which gives six brothers distinguishes the three eldest from the fourth or "middle one" (Stein 1961:16), but I have not been able to establish any functional homology with the tribal protoclans.

It might be supposed that in the large-scale centralized society of modern Tibet nothing would be found relating in any clear way to the archaic tribal social classifications. However, Aziz (1974:24) has written of the pre-Communist period, "In Tibet, four basic endogamous groups can be identified: *sger-pa* (aristocracy), *sṅags-pa* (hereditary priests), *mi-ser* (incl. agriculturalists, nomads, labourers, traders) and the *yawa* (outcastes)." She suggests in a footnote that the four classes together account for 99 percent of Tibetan society, far the largest being the *mi-ser* [commoners]. The last class includes such people as butchers, fishermen, and scavengers (for the older sources on Tibet's "untouchables" see Passin 1955).

Let us ignore for the moment the fact that the components in Aziz's list contrast with those of the tribal societies in being endogamous, not exogamous; it is enough that what we have here is apparently an exhaustive classification of society into four components whose nominal functions bear at least a *prima facie* similarity to those of the tribes. Rather similar lists can be found in Tibetan documents in mythological contexts, and two examples have been aligned with Aziz's in Table 1. Column 2 comes from the manuscript of a creation story which only mentions the

Table 1. Comparison of some fourfold classifications of society in Tibet and India (sources are explained in the text)

	1	2	3	4
	recent Tibet (Aziz 1972)	Tibetan creation stories (Oppitz 1968)	(Stein 1961)	classical Indian *varṇa* model
1	*sger-pa* aristocracy	royal lines	kings top of head white	Brahman priests mouth white
2	*sṅags-pa* priests	bramzes priests	Brahman priests neck red	Kṣatriya warriors/rulers arms red
3	*mi-ser* commoners	rJewus chieftains	Kṣatriya lords heart yellow	Vaiśya merchants thighs yellow
4	*yawa* outcastes	gDolpa fishermen/ despised castes	Sudra serfs feet black	Śūdra servants feet black

Sherpas in the last line (Oppitz 1968:30–31). The text introduces the Dolpa ("who respected neither their father on the one side nor their mother on the other and were incapable of distinguishing good and evil") before the Jewu (who "lived in their houses and paid their parents due respect"); otherwise the order has not been altered. Column 3 comes from an eighteenth-century Tibetan text, summarized by Stein (1961:6), which tells how from the top of the god's head arose a white man who was placed at the head of the caste of kings, from his neck a red one, and so on. This story, as Stein notes, obviously derives from the classical Indian *varna* myth which appears first in the late Rigvedic hymn known as the Puruṣasūkta, and was later given standard form in the Laws of Manu.

On comparing the columns of Table 1, it will be noted that the Tibetans regularly contrast with the Indians in placing the priest lower than the temporal power. This is probably to be expected since:

> According to Buddhist tradition, in times when the Brahmans are the highest class Buddhas are born in that class, while when Kṣatriyas are the highest they are born as Kṣatriyas. The historical Buddha was a Kṣatriya, and his followers evidently had few doubts about class priorities. Where the names of the four classes are mentioned together in the Pāli scriptures that of the Kṣatriya usually comes first (Basham 1967:142).

This would be sufficient explanation of the difference but we shall try to supplement it later.

A second point of comparison that may appear anomalous is the

alternation in the third row between commoners, who seem natural in such a position, and chieftains or lords.[5] But the hypothetically homologous tribal categories also bore the honorific labels of minister or administrator. The Tibetan tendency toward an elevation of the third row is seen not only in the titles but also in the shift of organ of origin from thigh to heart. The effect of the tendency is not only to relate the third category more closely to the first but also to emphasize the gap that we have met before between three of the components and the inferior fourth.

Doubtless fourfold classifications of society can be found the world over, and a determined skeptic might take the view that the associated functions that have emerged were insufficiently specific or uniform to permit meaningful comparisons among societies of such very different scales.[6] But let us assume that what we are dealing with is in some sense a unitary phenomenon, and ask how it could have arisen historically.

One possibility is that the basic model is the Indian one, which, after all, is at least two and a half millennia old. Tibetan Buddhism derives mainly from Indian Buddhism and much Tibetan literature is translated or derived from Sanskrit originals. Buddhism reached Tibet in the seventh century and was well established by the eleventh, allowing plenty of time for elements of it to have penetrated to outlying illiterate tribes such as the Thulung. The *varṇa* ideology might conceivably have reached the tribes directly from the south, but there is reason to think that the Thulung at least were in contact with Tibetan culture via the Sherpas well before they were in close contact with Hindus. This by no means rules out the possibility that the Hindu ideology directly affected already established fourfold classifications; indeed, this seems the most likely explanation for the fact that the Sherpas (and possibly the Thakali) seem to have contrasted with Tibet generally in giving the priestly component precedence over the kingly. In either case, this approach presupposes the priority of the linear organization of the categories over the more or less balanced paired or dual organization of the Thulung or Gurung type.

The hypothesis I prefer is that over the whole area the dual organization preceded the linear, i.e., that the tribes provide indications of a situation that was once general. Unfortunately, the strongest evidence in favor of this view lies in the kinship systems, especially in kinship ter-

[5] Similarly, in a context where a complete classification of society is intended, one reads that of the four types of tantra, one is suited to those inclined to ritual (a category identified with the Brahmans), one to the *rJe-rigs* [noblemen], one to the *rGyal-rigs* [of royal family, powerful men], and one to those who do not distinguish good from evil and lead impure lives (Tucci 1969:78–80, following his order). Rather than "nobleman," Das (1902 s.v. *rigs-bzhi* "the four castes of Ancient India") translates *rJe-rigs* as "the gentleman or trading caste."

[6] Nevertheless, Norbu and Turnbull (1972:51), who start a passage with the words "There are four main ways of life in Tibet," go on to give a classification which by no stretch of the imagination could be regarded as homologous with those we have discussed.

minologies. Examination of these is inevitably a lengthy process and it will be necessary here to be extremely cursory, even programmatic.

Kinship systems can be divided into two types. On the one hand are those where marriage with some category of relative is prescribed or preferred, in other words (following Dumont 1971:134), those where affinity is transmitted from generation to generation. On the other hand are those, such as our own, which lack this characteristic. The first type may be either symmetrical or asymmetrical. For present purposes we may neglect the patrilateral asymmetrical alternative,[7] and also such complications as intergenerational marriage, polyandry, differences between preferential and prescriptive systems, and inconsistencies between terminology and alliance. This leaves three ideal types: (1) symmetrical prescriptive systems, prescribing marriage with the bilateral cross-cousin and having terminologies distinguishing neither patrilateral relatives from matrilateral ones nor affines from cognates; (2) asymmetrical prescriptive systems, prescribing marriage of a man to his matrilateral cross-cousin and having terminologies that distinguish laterality but not affines and cognates; and (3) nonprescriptive systems, where the relationship between prospective spouses is not positively laid down in advance and where the terminology does distinguish affines from cognates.

The first type is very clearly represented by the Byansi, a tribe living in the extreme northwest corner of Nepal and an adjacent valley in India (Allen 1975). The nonprescriptive type is represented by the large-scale societies of Tibet and north India. The tribal peoples of Nepal stand between these two types and show a complex mixture of symmetrical, asymmetrical, and nonprescriptive features. For instance, all sources agree that Gurung marriage norms are symmetrical, though in practice and in the terminology there are nonsymmetrical features. Similarly, contemporary Thulung do not marry cross-cousins and have no memory of ever having done so. Yet the myths invariably refer to a man's parents-in-law as *nin-kuk*, where *nin* = FZ and *kuk* = MB; this equation, inexplicable to present-day Thulung, is of course thoroughly characteristic of a symmetrical prescriptive terminology. Furthermore, terminological evidence for a prescriptive type of kinship system in protohistoric Tibet[8] was presented by Benedict (1941), who was not greatly concerned with the distinction between symmetry and asymmetry. Now the relationship between these two is a matter of controversy. Lévi-Strauss (1969, summarized for the Sino-Tibetan area in 1958:72–73), who makes considerable use of Benedict's paper, appears to hold that the asymmetrical type is

[7] This seems justified in a paper focusing on Nepal. Further east there are Tibeto-Burman-speaking peoples such as the Na-khi, who are made up of four clans and show matrilineal and patrilateral features (Jackson 1971).

[8] Stein (1972:94) regards this picture as oversimplified, but it would be surprising if in fact there had not been variations over space and time.

basic chronologically as well as logically. However, for the Sherpas at least (Allen 1976b), there are reasons for thinking that the historical trend has been in the opposite direction. Others who in different contexts have favored this direction of change include De Josselin de Jong (1952:56), Needham (1967:45–46), and Dole (1972). I hope to return to this topic elsewhere, and at the moment merely state that a case can be made for the view that the kinship systems of Tibeto-Burman speakers in general were at one time symmetrical prescriptive ones.

There is of course no necessary connection between a symmetrical prescriptive kinship system and a classical dual organization, i.e., the division of society into two intermarrying moieties. Nevertheless, it will hardly be denied that the two are in practice commonly associated. Nor is there any necessary relationship between a dual and a quadripartite social structure (cf., Lévi-Strauss 1958: chap. 8), although again the association seems to be both common and natural. My suggestion then is that the *varṇa* schema is an adaptation of an underlying splitting of society, first into moieties (labeled for convenience kings and priests) and second into superior and inferior. The hypothesis must answer at least the following objections: (1) that the *varṇa* system does not show a dualistic structure of the required type; (2) that in any case its Indo-European origins are well established; and (3) that the people who elaborated the model had a nonprescriptive kinship system. We try to meet the objections one by one.

The *varṇa* system is sometimes presented as a series of oppositions, but as one having a structure different from that required by the hypothesis. Brahman priest contrasts with Kṣatriya king, but together the "Two Forces" contrast with the Vaiśya, the third component of the twice-born category; the twice-born contrast with the Śūdra, the remaining category within the traditional schema, and the four taken together contrast with the Harijans, the real untouchables; nowadays as Hindus the whole series may even be contrasted with non-Hindus (Dumont 1972:106–107, 240). But traditional Hinduism recognizes only the first four. "There is no fifth" say the texts (Dumont 1972:108), and Śarmā (1962 s.v.) gives *śūdra* as meaning both the fourth *varṇa* and Harijan; in other words, Śūdra and untouchables are identified. Two of the four, the Kṣatriya and the Vaiśya, are not (on the level of stereotype) performers of ritual; when the need arises, they must call on the other two to officiate on their behalf. It is probably unnecessary to stress the extent to which untouchables are ritual specialists. As Hocart puts it (1950:44) "Priest, washerman and drummer are treated alike, for they are all priests; only the Brahman is a higher kind of priest and so more munificently rewarded." Similarly, in the Thulung area no proper wedding is conceivable without the services of the tailor-musicians, lowest of the castes, and gifts to them are oblig-

atory whether or not a Brahman is called in. Thus, on the one side stand kings with their political and economic inferiors, whom we have met as "chieftains," "merchants," or "commoners" (i.e., ordinary taxpayers); on the other stand priests who specialize in purity and the Word, and their inferiors who specialize in impurity and manual activities.

It is well known that the earliest Rigvedic hymns refer only to the first three *varṇas*, and since 1930 Dumézil and his followers have established that these are merely one expression of a tripartite ideology that is reflected in the mythology, ritual, and social organization of the earlier speakers of all the main branches of Indo-European.[9] The etymology of the name Śūdra is uncertain, and there has been a good deal of discussion as to who the first Śūdra were. The usual conclusion is that the class was "formée sans doute d'abord des vaincus de la conquête arya" (Dumézil 1958:7). But this is to pose the question in substantive terms. For our purposes the question is not who constituted the fourth class but why the Indo-European threefold classificatory schema was abandoned in favor of a fourfold one. According to the hypothesis that we are presenting, the answer is that fourfold classificatory schemata were already being applied in Indian society (widely, but not necessarily universally) before the arrival of the Aryans, which started around 1500 B.C. The fact that the term *varṇa* and that the present names of the first three components of the classification are Sanskrit is neither surprising nor of particular relevance; the variability of the names of the components, even in literate Tibet, has been sufficiently exemplified.

Despite isolated indications (e.g., Lévi-Strauss 1969:403), it can hardly be supposed that the Vedic Indians in general had a prescriptive kinship system; on the contrary, the kinship terminology of Sanskrit, as of other Indo-European languages (with the notable exception of Sinhalese), is nonprescriptive. On the other hand, the kinship systems of contemporary Dravidian speakers of south India are prescriptive, and it is generally agreed that the early Aryan invaders must have come into intimate contact with proto-Dravidian speakers. The linguistic evidence for this is strong. Among other examples, Sanskrit and its descendants are virtually alone among Indo-European languages in having a series of cerebral phonemes, a fact that is readily explained by the occurrence of such phonemes in Dravidian languages (Emeneau 1956). From a sociolinguistic standpoint the interaction seems to have been complex (Southworth 1971). It is even more probable that the proto-Dravidian terminology was symmetrical prescriptive than that proto-Tibeto-

[9] Just as the present *varṇa* classification can be seen as having developed by the progressive accretion of new inferior categories contrasting with those already included in the model, so it has been suggested that the tripartite classification itself resulted from the subjection of a sedentary population representing the third function by a people corresponding to the first two, i.e., organized on the basis of a dualistic classification into ritualists and nonritualists (Littleton 1966:155, 169).

Burman was. Moreover, three millennia after the period we are discussing, Dumont (1966:114) writes, on the basis of recent field research, that north Indian kinship vocabulary "is in all appearance a compromise between a Dravidian practice and an Indo-Aryan verbal inheritance," that "institutions which are easy to describe among Dravidian speaking people underlie the apparently quite different, and by comparison relatively inconsistent system of the North."

In passing from the fourfold classifications of the tribal peoples to those of Tibet and India, we left aside the fact that the components of the former are exogamous, whereas those of the latter are in principle endogamous. It is easy to overestimate the conceptual difference between a society whose components are related by the exchange of women and one whose components are related by the exchange of services (cf., Lévi-Strauss 1962: chap. 4). For a given component one could imagine the transition to have occurred in either or both of two ways: internally, by the breakdown of the exogamic rule, or externally, by the formation of alliances with the homologous component in one or more neighboring societies. It has often been supposed that "aboriginal" Indian chiefs and probably priests were included in the *varṇa* classification in the second way (Basham 1967:140), though in fact this is not what has been happening in the Himalayan societies discussed. There the fourfold classifications are barely detectable survivals, and the societies as wholes, often with substantial additions not accommodated by the classification, are being incorporated into the contemporary Hindu state in the form of castes whose precise relationship to the *varṇa* schema is unclear. Hocart (1950:33) suggests a reasonable explanation for this vagueness: the quadripartite grouping (whose relationship to the four cardinal points he has been emphasizing) "is naturally no longer as clear cut as it once was, because it is an organisation proper to small agricultural states." One might add that moiety organization is characteristic of even smaller scale societies. Other factors no doubt contributed to the linear reorganization of the four components — for instance, the linear ordering of the three Indo-European functions, or Aryan racial concepts — but a change in scale would have been sufficient by itself to make it unlikely that a balanced pairing should survive.

The hypothetical transition from a paired-off to a linear ordering of the four components necessitated decisions as to relative rank within the superior pair and within the inferior one. On the first issue we have seen that the Buddhists compromised, accepting the principle of unambiguous ranking at a given moment, but allowing it to alternate over time. But is their choice simply a historical accident due to the birth of the Buddha as a prince? Dumont (1972:260, 332), in one of his rare historical speculations, has followed Hocart in supposing that in pre-Aryan India the preeminence belonged to the king; in reversing the order the Hindus

would have been innovating in accordance with the Indo-European part of their heritage. Similarly, the legends of pre-Buddhist Tibet focus straightforwardly on the kings and their relationship with heaven, the priesthood being left in relative obscurity. As to the second issue, it seems intuitively natural that specialists in impurity should be ranked lower than the inferior stratum of the nonritualists, and we have met hints of this tendency even in the most balanced of the tribal systems.

Since the second half of this paper has patently been an exercise in what is sometimes dismissed as "conjectural history," it may be as well to end by indicating how the hypothesis it has developed could be put to the test. We may never have direct documentary evidence on social classification in ancient Tibet or pre-Aryan India, but folk models of society might well be reflected in later indigenous literature, even if under the guise of myth or legend.[10] From the ethnographic point of view, a great deal more information and comparative analysis is needed on the kinship systems and social structure of the tribal peoples of Nepal and other parts of South Asia. It would be relevant too to explore, both in other parts of the world and theoretically, the relationship suggested above between social quadripartition and symmetrical prescriptive kinship terminologies.

[10] I am thinking of the fascinating work of Dumézil (1968). His analysis concentrates on detecting in the *Mahābhārata* those themes that derive from the Indo-European heritage of its composers, but he suggests that other influences, in particular Shaivite ones (1968:220, 230, 239), may also have contributed to the epic. Although it is doubtless mistaken to think of Arjuna as "the" hero of the work (240–241), he is in many senses the central figure among the five brothers. Not only is he literally the middle one in the list, but he is also son of Indra, who is king of the gods (151–152). In a variant version it is he rather than the eldest brother who in the name of the others marries their common wife (117). It is certainly he who won her through his archery, and it is him that she loves most, a fault that is given as the reason for her death on the journey to paradise (120–121). In addition, he marries the sister of Krishna, and it is this marriage that ensures the Pāṇḍava succession via his son Abhimanyu, incarnation of the moon (245), and his grandson Parikṣit, who may be historical (242). Of the five he is the one their teacher Droṇa prefers (121, 202–203) and the one their archenemy Karṇa most detests (121, 132). Though all the brothers are Kṣatriya, it is he who best incarnates the ideal of that *varṇa* (65). Thus in many senses he transcends or stands outside the series, stands, as it were, at the hub of a *maṇḍala*. This leaves four brothers. Of these the twins are clearly the inferior couple: born of Pāṇḍu's second wife, whose brother is a demon (75), they are the youngest and least often mentioned, and one of their two most marked characteristics is their obedience (65, 69). On the other hand, it is no less clear that the elder twin, Nakula, has marked affinities with Bhīma, the second brother, the warrior, whereas Sahadeva, the younger twin, is associated with Yudhiṣṭhira, the eldest of the five (76ff, following Wikander). Among many other instances of this, one notes that during the great horse sacrifice (in which Arjuna appears little concerned) Bhīma and Nakula defend the kingdom, while Sahadeva occupies himself with domestic matters. Sahadeva is a specialist in cattle (cf., the Thulung "cowherds"), Nakula in horses, which are associated with royalty and war. In a battle, at which Arjuna is not present, the numbers of victims slain by the four brothers are as follows (66), the vertical spacing following the birth order:

Yudhiṣṭhira 1000

Bhīma 700

(Arjuna)

Nakula 700

Sahadeva 300

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This note is admittedly compressed and sketchy, perhaps misconceived, but no reader of Dumézil's analysis will suppose that it would have been beyond the ingenuity of the composers of the *Mahābhārata* to interweave the tripartite Indo-European ideology with a more dualistic pre-Aryan one in the manner suggested.

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Kinship and Culture in the Himalayan Region

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"Kinship and culture" refers to the hypothesis developed by Hsu (1963; 1965; 1971a), which seeks to explain cross-cultural variation in cultural and psychological orientations by means of cross-cultural differences in the relative importance of certain dyadic kinship relationships. Hsu characterizes Chinese culture as "situation-centered," and explains this by the dominance of the father-son relationship; he characterizes Hindu culture as "supernatural-centered," and explains this by the dominance of the mother-son relationship in the Indian nuclear family.

This essay represents a development of the notion that the principle of explanation used by Hsu to account for differences between India and China might prove heuristically valuable in the study of overlapping Chinese and Indian influences in the Himalayan region. The major conclusion that will emerge is that the "kinship and culture" hypothesis requires a radical reformulation if it is to be useful in this region.

Hsu's hypothesis is not primarily directed toward the special case of explaining differences between India and China; he is making a general argument that the dominant kinship relationship in the family system of a culture serves as an essential model of human relationships both within and outside the nuclear family:

> The dominant attributes of the dominant dyad in a given kinship system tend to determine the attitudes and action patterns that the individual in such a system develops towards other dyads in this system as well as towards his relationships outside of the system (Hsu 1971a:10, italics omitted).

Hsu acknowledges, however, that not all kinship systems are going to have a single dominant dyad:

> Of course, a kinship system may be dominated by (1) a single dyad; (2) two dyads simultaneously; (3) two dyads alternatively (depending upon the situation); (4)

two dyads, one of which is subordinate to the other; (5) multiple dyads; (6) no dyad; or (7) one dyad jurally and a second dyad in matters of affect. Some of the contributers have even suggested the possibility of a dominant relationship between a man and his lineage, or between a man and his land (1971b:490).

Although this acknowledgment gives the hypothesis great flexibility, it also seems to deprive it of most of its potential explanatory power, for it is the dominant attributes of the dominant dyad which provide the explanatory link between the family system and the rest of the culture.

An "attribute" is defined as "the logical or typical mode of behavior and attitude intrinsic to each dyad" (Hsu 1971a: 8). Hsu stresses the term "intrinsic," as indicating the universally "potential and inherent properties of that dyad." The assumption that a given attribute is intrinsic to one dyad, but not to another, seems to be central to the explanatory potential of the hypothesis. For this allows one to say that one dyad has influenced another dyad by causing it to have an attribute which is not intrinsic to it. The father-son dyad, for example, has the intrinsic attributes of "continuity," "inclusiveness," "authority," and "asexuality." The husband-wife dyad possesses, among others, the attribute of "exclusiveness." But when the father-son dyad is dominant, the husband-wife dyad becomes more inclusive.

> Hence married partners in this system can be expected to be aloof to each other in public, for they often place their duties and obligations toward parents before those toward each other. Custom will strongly disapprove of any sign of public intimacy between spouses. Instead it enjoins them to exhibit ardent signs of devotion to their (especially his) elders. In case of a quarrel between the wife and the mother-in-law, the husband must take the side of the latter against the former, especially in public. Polygyny with the ostensible aim of begetting male heirs to continue the father-son line is a structural necessity (1971a:18).

If, however, there is judged to be more than one dominant dyad in the system, this type of explanation becomes difficult, if not impossible.

At first glance, it would seem that there is relatively little problem in determining the dominant kinship dyad in Nepal and Tibet. It is the mother-son dyad. As in India, these seem to be "supernatural-centered" cultures. Indeed, Hsu speaks of the Hindu family system as being dominated by the mother-son dyad, rather than of the Indian family system, and much of Nepal, of course, is Hindu. And Ekvall (1968:80) testifies to the supernatural-centered orientation of Tibet, "To these concepts of the supernatural and its myriad denizens, the Tibetans respond with a depth of devotion, shown in allocation of effort, time, and wealth, that has made Tibetan society and culture the classic example of religion oriented living."

Hsu himself provides an argument for mother-son dominance in the

family systems of the Tibetans and Sherpas. The attributes of the mother-son relationship are, according to Hsu, "discontinuity," "inclusiveness," "dependence," "diffuseness," and "libidinality." Like the father-son dyad, the mother-son dyad, through its intrinsic attribute of inclusiveness, renders the husband-wife dyad less exclusive, but with a difference:

> If the attributes of exclusiveness and sexuality are commensurate with monogamy, and those of inclusiveness and continuity are in line with polygyny, then those of inclusiveness and libidinality or diffused sexuality favor plurality of spouses in general, including polygyny and polyandry, as well as other practices such as cicisbeism defined by Prince Peter as "an arrangement between the sexes, wherein one or more of the male partners is not related to the woman in marriage," or conjoint-marriage in which polygyny is combined with polyandry, enabling several males (often related) to be married to several females (Hsu 1971a:20–21; citing Prince Peter 1963:22).

Hsu (1971a:29) points out that Prince Peter found that eleven of the eighteen societies practicing polyandry were found in India or nearby, as in Ceylon and Tibet. Although he does not say so explicitly, the implication is clear that he considers Tibet to resemble India in the dominance of the mother-son dyad.

There seems to be some circularity of reasoning here, for we have inferred the presence of mother-son dominance from the presence of those qualities which mother-son dominance is supposed to explain. And if we examine the family systems of the Chetris, Magars, Sherpas, and Tibetans, we quickly see that the dominance of the mother-son dyad is not as clear as it had seemed at first.

For all four of these groups, the argument made by Levy (1971:38–39) seems valid. Levy claims that the dominant dyad must center on authority and accession to authority. Because there are no truly matriarchal societies, the dominant relationship must center upon a young male as one of the elements. The other party to a dominant relationship could be a mother only in a matrilineal society, and then only if the nuclear family is interpreted strictly, so that a boy's relationship with the mother is more important than his relationship with the male head of the household. Therefore, since none of the societies in the Himalayan region that we are considering here are matrilineal, the dominant relationship in each of these family systems must be father-son.

Hsu's response to this argument has already been presented in his acknowledgement that there are different possibilities for combinations of dominant relationships. The father-son relationship could be said to dominate jurally, with the mother-son dyad dominant in matters of affect. This kind of explanation would seem to work for Indians and the Chetris of Nepal, who tend to follow Indian patterns more closely and more deliberately than do the other groups. But, as mentioned before, once more than one relationship is said to be dominant, the problem of using

kinship dominance as a principle of explanation increases greatly.

When we look at the family system of the Magars, however, the picture becomes even more complicated. Hitchcock (1966:41–43) says that a Magar family of Banyan Hill "may be characterized in many ways as an amended and relaxed version of the traditional landowning Hindu family of the north Indian plains." He details some of the ways in which the Magar family resembles the north Indian family, then provides the contrast:

> Perhaps the major difference between the two types of family is the emphasis that the Magars place upon the husband and wife. Soon after sons marry, they generally set up their own establishments, and among the Banyan Hill Magars there were no instances of brother living with brother. In such families, there is no bar to a strong erotic and affectionate tie between husband and wife, and when such a tie does not exist, there is opportunity to terminate the marriage.

Hitchcock goes on to present scenes of everyday village life which convey the quality of the husband-wife relationship. "During the heat of noon, Bir Bahadur, his wife, and his son are sleeping side by side on rice-straw mats inside his open-sided storage shed. These are scenes of a life shared in a great many spheres of activity, with a minimum of avoidance. The basic tone is one of easy companionship."

Hinduism, as well as the customs of north India, support a patriarchal bias, which is, however, counterbalanced among Magars by factors which give wives greater independence. The neolocal residence pattern, the practice of giving a gift for a daughter to keep as her own when she marries, the fact that a woman acquires a share of her husband's property at marriage, the ease with which a woman can end an unhappy marriage, and a woman's important contribution to the family economy all support the independence of wives.

Finally, an important difference in making the husband-wife relationship in Banyan Hill from that on the plains is the affectionate and erotic side of life between them. This aspect begins before marriage in cooperative work groups and singing groups (Hitchcock 1966:43–46).

Granting the jural dominance of the father-son relationship, under what conditions will the mother-son relationship be affectively dominant? Hsu (1963:48–49) argues that in spite of the fact that Hindu society is more male-oriented than Chinese society, the mother-son relationship is dominant in India as a result of two circumstances: (1) adult males are more segregated from females and from the children in Hindu society, and (2) the relationship between fathers and sons is more distant in India than in China. These circumstances do not seem to be present to any great degree in Banyan Hill, but there does seem to be an importance given to the husband-wife dyad which is not present in the traditional Hindu family of northern India.

Nor do the circumstances that seem to result in Indian mother-son dominance occur among the Sherpas or Tibetans. The adult males are not segregated from the females and the children, and fathers are not unusually distant from their sons. Fürer-Haimendorf's (1964:80) descriptions of Sherpa family life suggest that the Sherpas are much more removed from the pattern of the plains than are the Magars.

> A Sherpa marriage is basically a partnership between two equals. Nothing in Sherpa tradition and ritual suggests that a Sherpa wife should regard her husband as her lord and master to whom she owes obedience and respect. The admonitions given to the bridal couple at the time of the wedding rite do not distinguish between the duties and responsibilities of a husband and those of a wife, and the rules relating to a dissolution of a marriage also bear out the equal rights of both partners.

The Sherpas are, of course, more removed from the plains geographically than are the Magars, so one would not expect them to be as deeply influenced by Hindu norms regarding the family. But Sherpas are one of the groups "in or near India" that practice polyandry. And polyandry was explained by Hsu in terms of the result of the dominant mother-son dyad upon the husband-wife dyad. But the presence of polyandry among the Sherpas clearly does not allow one to infer mother-son dominance in the Sherpa family.

Nevertheless, when Hsu argues that the exclusiveness of the husband-wife bond is reduced in societies which allow polyandry, he seems to be correct. According to Fürer-Haimendorf, sexual jealousy is foreign to Sherpa thinking. "Used to complete freedom in the choice of lovers before marriage, Sherpas have never developed the feeling that there is any inherent merit in sexual exclusiveness" (1964:73). It is doubtful, however, that this decreased exclusiveness is due to the combined effect of the mother-son attributes of inclusiveness and libidinality. Furthermore, it seems open to question, from the perspective of Sherpa society, whether or not exclusiveness is an *intrinsic* attribute of the husband-wife dyad at all. If it is not, then there really is no need for some other dyad to be dominant in order to make polyandry — or polygyny — possible as an accepted practice.

Goldstein (1971a; 1971b) argues that polyandry in Tibet is not primarily due to personality factors or broad cultural orientations, but to the need to preserve the family estate intact. He formulates a "monomarital principle," which states that only one marriage should be contracted in a given generation, and that all of the offspring of the marriage shall have full jural rights in the corporation.

He maintains that monogamy is the preferred ideal, but that polyandry occurs when the rules of land tenure in a semifeudal economic system make it expedient. This seems to provide an example of a nonfamilial

relationship exercising dominance over kinship dyads. In this case, it would be either the relationship of a family to its land, or the relationship of an individual to his or her feudal lord. The discussion in this volume by Aziz of the Tibetan *ga-nye* relationship provides another example of a nonfamilial relationship exercising a kind of dominance over relationships within the family. Aziz describes the *ga-nye* system as a set of networks of relationships between households, characterized by reciprocation of mutual aid. On a personal level, one's *ga-nye* is a trusted, but not deeply intimate, friend. The *ga-nye* acts to maintain a specific moral relationship between a person and the wider community. What is significant for the present discussion, is that the *ga-nye*'s sphere of action includes the mediation of relationships within the family.

It is not surprising that Paul (1972:1450–1451) states that he cannot identify any dominant kinship relationships for his materials on Nepal. Hsu (1971b:489) himself points out that "foremost among the areas needing future efforts is how to determine the dominant dyad, or dyads, in a given society." The evidence that has been presented here to argue that the mother-son dyad is *not* the dominant dyad, jurally or affectively, among the Magars, Sherpas, or Tibetans is not intended to be used to argue that any other dyad is dominant.

Contrary to Hsu's desires for future efforts, it does not seem to be particularly promising to try to isolate a single dominant dyad for these societies. Taken with what has been said earlier about the weakening of the explanatory power of the hypothesis if several dyads are said to be dominant in a society, this leaves the kinship and culture hypothesis in need of reformulation, if what is valid in it is not to be lost.

What is valuable in the hypothesis is the attempt to come to grips with the relationships between family structure and broader cultural and psychological orientations, and the emphasis upon relationships within the family rather than upon single actors as models for imitation or identification. What seems questionable about the hypothesis is its dependence upon the isolation of one dyad as the dominant one in a family system, and the assumption that each dyad has a set of intrinsic attributes which are "universally the potential and inherent properties of that dyad" (Hsu 1971a:8).

As defined by Hsu (1971a:11), the attributes seem to have two distinct elements, although some of the definitions do not state the two elements explicitly. To illustrate with attributes that explicitly give the two elements, "continuity" is defined as "the condition of being, or the attitude of desiring to be, an unbroken sequence, or connected with others." "Dependence" is defined as "the condition of being or the attitude of wishing to be reliant upon others." The first element in an attribute is a "condition," and the second is a corresponding "attitude."

When combined with the dyadic relationship, these two elements seem

to be part of a three-level scheme relating a behavioral disposition (attitude), a cultural definition (condition), and a social relationship (dyad). Where this may differ from Hsu's thought in an important way is in speaking of the "condition" as a cultural definition. For Hsu's talk about attributes as intrinsic seems to make the relationship between the dyad and the condition (and possibly the attitude as well) a matter of natural law rather than of cultural definition. The cultural variability for Hsu seems to be more in the relationship that is dominant, than in the attribute which is associated with that relationship.

The attitude is a psychological variable, and can be ignored for the moment in order to consider the relationship and the condition more closely. Hsu's kinship dyads consist of what Goodenough (1969) calls "identity relationships." Goodenough defines a "social identity" as "an aspect of self that makes a difference in how one's rights and duties distribute to specific others." "Son" is a social identity that can enter into a grammatical relationship with either the social identity "father" or "mother." In a given culture, the rights and duties of sons may be quite different in the father-son and in the mother-son relationships. On the other hand, very different identity relationships may imply similar right and duty relationships, or what Goodenough calls "status relationships." Goodenough (1969:317) sums up the analysis which has been greatly condensed here:

> These observations demonstrate that the structure of a society's status relationships must be analyzed and described in different terms from those that describe the structure of its identity relationships. A culturally ordered system of *social relationships*, then, is composed (among other things) of identity relationships, status relationships, and the ways in which they are mutually distributed.

It is important to note that social identities, identity relationships, rights, duties, statuses, and status relationships are all culturally defined.

The heuristic clue provided by the hypothesis as formulated by Hsu is the dominant kinship dyad, which is an identity relationship. It would seem to be far more fruitful, in the light of the difficulties of determining the dominant dyad, to use the dominant status relationship, or relationships, as the heuristic clue to the analysis of kinship and culture. The focus upon status relationships would allow the investigator to start with any social identity in the kinship system, ask about the most important rights and duties associated with that social identity, and determine the other social identities to which the first identity's rights and duties are distributed.

In terms of Hsu's formulation, this would mean starting at the level of attributes rather than dyads. For the "condition" aspect of Hsu's definitions of attributes seems to be close to a statement of a status relationship.

Dependence, as a condition of being reliant upon others, involves a right to get help or support and a complementary duty — of others — to give that aid. To the extent that dependence is a dominant status relationship within the culture, it will be involved in one or more identity relationships within the family system.

Hsu (1971a: 20) says that in a mother-son dominant family system, the authority of the father over the son (intrinsic attribute of father-son relationship) is weakened so that the father becomes more like a male mother. This is because of the dominance of the attribute of dependence (intrinsic attribute of mother-son relationship). It seems much simpler to say that dependence is a dominant status relationship within the Indian family system and that this status relationship is found present in both the father-son and mother-son identity relationships.

On the other hand, one would not expect to find dependence dominant within the family system of the Sherpas, for Fürer-Haimendorf (1964: 97) claims that "the principle of strict reciprocity in all social relations is basic to Sherpa society, and there is no room for any relationship involving a predominance of obligations for the one party, and a predominance of rights for the other." Given this kind of orientation within the culture, one would expect to find status relationships within the family which would be instances of reciprocity between two social identities.

Methodologically, it seems to be a much easier task to determine what status relationships are important than to try to determine which kinship dyads are dominant. It is then possible to study the ways in which kinship dyads incorporate the more important status relationships. It may be in some, or many, cases that a single kinship dyad will exemplify a large majority of the important status relationships within the kinship system. This relationship could then logically be termed "dominant." The father-son relationship in traditional China is probably a dominant relationship in this respect. This approach should allow the investigator to arrive at a ranking of kinship dyads in terms of the number and importance of status relationships they possess, and also should allow for judgments about which dyad is important in what respects.

The reformulation of the kinship and culture hypothesis can be tentatively made in the following terms: the dominant status relationships in a given kinship system tend to determine the attitudes and action patterns that the individual in such a system develops in his identity relationships within this system as well as toward his relationships outside of the system.

The procedure for using this hypothesis to examine the Himalayan interface between the South Asian and Chinese culture areas would be similar to what was actually begun in the attempt to use the kinship and culture hypothesis in its original formulation. Inclusiveness is present from India, through Nepal and Tibet, and into China. It is exemplified in

identity relationships in all of the kinship systems we have discussed, but in different ways.

Hsu explained polyandry as a manifestation of the combination of inclusiveness and diffused sexuality, or libidinality. But among the Sherpas and Tibetans, where polyandry is present, there is a much more explicit sexuality than there is in the plains of north India, where polyandry is not present among caste Hindus. The way that sexuality and libidinality are defined as alternatives on a single dimension,[1] combined with the ethnographic facts, would seem to make Hsu's analysis of the basis of polyandry untenable.

An examination of the husband-wife relationship among the Magars of Banyan Hill did not resolve the question of what kinship dyad was dominant there, but rather pointed to the qualities of the relationship and the kinds of status relationships that seemed to be involved. Thus, the wife has a right to a share of the husband's property at marriage, and the husband has the duty to surrender this to her. The relative equality of females to males, as well as the more explicit sexuality seemed to characterize Tibetans and Sherpas as well as Magars. This seems to contrast with the dominant status relationships in both China and India.

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Cultural Implications of Tibetan History

CHIE NAKANE

Tibet, in terms of historical background, is aligned with many Asian societies, such as those of Korea, Japan, Vietnam, and other states in Southeast Asia, each of which has developed into an integrated unit under the stimulus of Chinese and/or Indian civilization. These states, which began to appear in the historical records by the third to seventh centuries, form the peripheries of the two great cultures in Asia. The first recorded appearance of Tibet as a political unit, the core of which was situated in the region of the later capital, Lhasa, was in the early seventh century. By that time, Tibet had already developed in a distinct empire under King Song-tsen Gampo, extending its territory into Central Asia, Nepal, and upper Burma, as well as occupying the eastern portion of Chinese territory including Kansu and the greater part of Szechwan and northern Yunnan. Tibetan troops even invaded the then Chinese (Tang) capital, Chang'an. As a result, the Chinese emperor finally agreed to give a princess in marriage to King Song-tsen Gampo, and the princess, Wen-ch'eng Kung-chu, was sent to Tibet in the year 641.

The capital seat of the kingdom was eventually established at Lhasa, and it has been the center of Tibet ever since. Under King Song-tsen Gampo nine ministers of varying rank and a number of governors (*khos-pon*) were appointed to administer the kingdom. We do not know exactly how widely the imperial administration was dispersed in order to maintain control over the fairly broad range of territory. It is clear that the territory covered the entire region where the Tibetan language was spoken, including the bordering areas inhabited by different peoples. Therefore, by the seventh century Tibetans not only were sharing the same language but were recruited under the same political system, a situation which must have contributed to the unity of Tibetan-speaking

people in various areas, such as Ü, Tsan, Kham, Amdo, and Gnari, in spite of local variations of certain customs.

However, it was not until the period between the eleventh and fifteenth centuries, subsequent to the reign of the ancient kingdom, that the process of the integrity of Tibet as a cultural and social unit came really into force. This was the period of the formation of Tibetan Buddhism, attested to so clearly by the establishment of temples and monasteries in various places in Tibetan-speaking areas, along with the activities of distinguished Buddhist scholars and monks, many of whom formed schools and sects. These studies in turn led to great intellectual advancement in Tibet. Tibetan Buddhism developed its unique form on the basis of imported Buddhist learning from India. Related to such religious and scholastic activities was the growth of powerful local families, through whom economic development had advanced a great deal, and who were also the patrons of monks and monasteries. These factors together made possible the setting up of fairly effective and functional networks of communication throughout Tibet and into the surrounding areas. It is surprising to learn, for example, that as early as the eleventh century when Atisha, a great Indian Buddhist scholar, came to central Tibet the news soon reached Kham, in eastern Tibet, from where enthusiastic young monks began traveling all the way to central Tibet in order to study under him. By the thirteenth century, monks from various parts of Tibet, including Mongolia, Sikkim, and Bhutan, came to study in the leading monasteries in central Tibet. Thus, at the monastic training level central Tibet, with its unique characteristics, had already become the radiant force for outlying areas. The monasteries, like those of medieval Europe, thus not only became the centers of learning with a considerable economic base (estates), but developed as well a powerful voice in political affairs.

During this period the Mongol Empire overran China and extended its power also into Tibet. One of the Tibetan sects which had grown into a considerable power by this time — the early thirteenth century — was the Saskya. When the Mongol Empire, Yuan, made a deal with Tibet, it was the Saskya Pandita who was appointed vice-regent in Tibet. The Saskya Pandita's successor, Phagpa (under Kublai, who became ruler of all the Mongols in 1260) was entrusted with the task of reorganizing the Tibetan administration. At this time the revenue system was introduced in Tibet. However, there were other powerful sects and local families in Tibet who did not necessarily maintain good relations with the Saskya. These powers struggled among themselves, each trying to get hegemony over the others. The authority over Tibet the Saskya enjoyed as protégés of the Mongols began to decline in the face of other growing local powers, and their hegemony was finally lost due to the decline of the Yuan dynasty.

One of the most powerful families was the Pagmotru, headed by

Chang-chub Gyaltsen. By 1350 Chang-chub Gyaltsen had established himself as actual master of all Tibet, deliberately fostering a feeling of national unity and reviving the traditions and glories of the early kings. There were several other family groups, each joining forces with its respective monastic group, competing with the Pagmotru. Also during this period the various religious sects were competing among themselves without any central authority. Under such circumstances, Tibetan Buddhist scholars and monks had to work hard for the attainment of their goals. Among those competing was the newly reformed school, Geruk-pa — which had produced the most famous scholar in Tibetan history, Tson-ka-pa, who was also its founder — which gradually gained power over the other sects. This school also produced the Dalai Lama — the first Dalai Lama being a disciple of Tson-ka-pa — whose successors later became the supreme authority of Tibet. The secret of success of this school on the Tibetan political scene is to be found in its good diplomatic relations with the Mongols, particularly with the Qoshot Mongol prince, Gusri Khan, who had active military forces based in the Kokonor region, situated at the main road to Tibet from the north. Gusri Khan, in occupying Tibet, assumed the title of King of Tibet which he transmitted to his descendants. In 1642 he conferred on the Dalai Lama (the fifth) the supreme authority over all Tibet from Tachienlu in the east up to the Ladakh border in the west. The Dalai Lama had become the temporal and spiritual leader of Tibet.

Although it required Gusri Khan's intervention to establish the Dalai Lama's temporal and spiritual authority over Tibet, it would appear by this time the Buddhist world of Tibet had itself begun to mature to the point of stabilizing the situation with the various sects recognizing the order of his supremacy. It was indeed significant that the Dalai Lama was recognized as the supreme figure for all Tibetans, for this made it possible to institutionalize Tibetan political and religious forces. The Dalai Lama in fact did become an effective figure for the unity and stable political organization of Tibet. However, there was an inherent weakness in the succession system through reincarnation, whereby only a newborn infant could succeed the Dalai Lama at his death. Naturally, the enthronement of the successor would take place only fifteen years or so after he was designated. This interregnum presented a critical period, during which the regent took over the administration as the representative authority. Moreover, since the Dalai Lama was primarily a religious figure, an administrator was required even after his enthronement.

During the seventeenth century, the period of the fifth and sixth Dalai Lamas, the chief administrator, called *Desi*, possessed a highly centralized power. In 1720 the office of *Desi* was abolished, on the ground that it placed too much power in one man's hands. A new type of government was established, headed by a council of ministers — two seniors and two

juniors — who were to be responsible for the administration. This ministerial system was fully institutionalized, particularly after 1751, and characterized the Tibetan bureaucracy until the eve of the Chinese occupation. The former finance minister, Shakabpa, comments on this system as follows:

> Since the administration of all departments depended upon the council ministers for final decisions, it sometimes functioned with delay and irresponsibility. This system, which lasted for two hundred years, impeded the progress of the country. Its weakness manifested itself in time of crisis, because there was no one to assume overall responsibility for making decisions. The one point in its favor was that it prevented a dictatorship from developing and reduced dishonesty to a minimum, because each of its members acted as a check on the others (Shakabpa 1967).

These ministers and other ranked officers were mostly recruited from noble families. The government itself often turned into the locus of struggles for power among peers, and this again invited the interference of foreign powers, thus threatening the Tibetan polity.

However weak and unstable the Tibetan government may have been, it was looked upon by its neighboring countries as a stable and strong center. As a matter of fact, the Tibetan government had to deal constantly with smaller kingdoms and local powers in trouble around its borders, particularly Nepal, Sikkim, and Bhutan. It felt this area was its responsibility, the "Tibetan World." This political area corresponded fairly well to the cultural area covered by Tibetan Buddhism. What made it possible for Tibet to be an integral and independent society indeed was to be found in these political and religious systems, and in their combination a distinct stratum of the elite was formed. Although the elite constituted a fairly clear-cut stratum from the rest of the society, it constantly had new recruitment from the peasant population. Monkhood was open to males of whatever background: a poor peasant, through training and by passing examinations, could achieve higher status in the religious organization. New noble families were created as a new Dalai Lama was recognized. At the same time, a noble family occasionally took a commoner as an adopted son-in-law. The vertical integration between elite and commoners was greater than one might have thought in the Tibetan case.

Since ancient times, Tibet enjoyed a culturally fairly uniform population not so disturbed by the migration of other peoples as to affect the total social structure, though surrounded by various peoples in bordering areas on every side. Disturbances in terms of cultural confrontation with other peoples were mostly confined to the border areas. Internal strife and the interferences of external powers were another matter. Tibet remained through it all a homogeneous society, though its geographical demarcation was often blurred. It continuously retained a distinct core, and the peripheral areas were always subject to the pull of its gravity, thus encouraging the development of the Tibetan culture.

The Tibetan world, characterized by its culture, language, and political system, found its expression symbolized in Tibetan Buddhism. Its world view, its intellectual and moral concerns, all derived from Tibetan Buddhism, which was heavily influenced by Indian thought. Surprisingly, it took nothing from Chinese thought, in spite of frequent and close contacts with China. Indeed it had more contacts than any other country with China, so much so as to be finally incorporated into Chinese territory. Unfortunately its contacts with China were always accompanied by political involvements, which may have reinforced the negative feeling of Tibetans culturally against China. Political interference by China (as was the case during the Chin dynasty) may have inspired Tibetans to search for a non-Chinese identity. However, this attitude is not necessarily applicable to other periods. There were many peaceful periods with China when they may have had considerable cultural exchange. In fact, temples of Tibetan Buddhism were built in China, and distinguished Tibetan lamas made occasional visits to China. However, no Chinese intellectuals were invited to Tibet except during the earliest period of the introduction of Buddhism into Tibet. In the eighth century there were Chinese monks as well as Indian monks in Tibet, though the latter outnumbered the former, each representing a different school of Buddhism. The Chinese taught that enlightenment was an instantaneous realization attainable only through complete mental and physical inactivity; the Indian system taught that enlightenment was achieved by study, analysis, and good deeds. The king, Trisong Detsen, called upon Hoshang, a Chinese monk, and Kamalasila, a famous Indian monk, for a debate on the premise that Tibet, for the establishment of its own Buddhism, would adopt the school of the monk who won the debate. The debate was held over a two-year period (792–794), and at the end it was Kamalasila who was declared the winner. This historical episode symbolizes the Tibetan orientation toward India from the early stage of the development of Tibetan Buddhism.

We find Chinese cultural influence among the Tibetans only in fragmentary elements, such as in the traditional life style of noble families, for example, Chinese-style dishes with the use of chopsticks, furniture, and materials for ladies' ornaments and dresses. Status symbols such as names of ranks of higher civil servants were styled in the Chinese way, introduced through the Mongols. On the whole, Tibetans are very different from the Koreans, Japanese, and Vietnamese, all of whom were much influenced by Chinese intellectual, political, and ethnical traditions. It is interesting to consider why Tibetans did not accept the Chinese culture in the same way as these other peoples situated closely to China.

In this regard, certain differences between the other Far Eastern societies and Tibet may be significant. Geographically, Tibet neighbors not only on China but also on India: Tibet had direct access to India, unlike the other societies that received Buddhism through China. Once

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Central Asia. The interface will be defined and discussed in terms of this confrontation. In other words, this brief essay will be a test of limits, both geographic and conceptual. The full data are being prepared for presentation elsewhere; here just enough detail will be offered to make the case plausible.

Dumont has attempted to reduce the welter of regional differences in caste ranking throughout the South Asian subcontinent to a single, overarching binary contrast, namely the ideological opposition of the pure and the impure. The key word here is ideological, for Dumont is not concerned with what he regards as the superficial and treacherously misleading shoals of concrete behavior, which are larely economic and political residues, but rather with the ideas, values, and concepts that underlie and determine or, in his phrase, "encompass" behavior. Thus in his view castes are not stratified in horizontal layers, but encompassed, as in a series of nesting boxes, in ritual hierarchy, so that at the highest, most inclusive level, the Brahman encompasses all other castes by virtue of the purity he embodies, and so on down through the hierarchy to the untouchables, who are encompassed by all the castes above them by virtue of the impurity they absorb and shield others from. In brief, what characterizes the caste system is its religion-centered hierarchy with Brahmans at the apex.

In Dolpa District in northwest Nepal, the predominantly Magar valley in which I worked, called Tichurong in Tibetan, is roughly halfway between Jumla and Mustang. Its multiethnic inhabitants are grouped and differentiated in several different ways, and I now want to describe that system and its meanings to compare it with the Indian system.

Tichurong is a "natural" region composed of thirteen villages isolated from villages outside the valley by long stretches of uninhabited territory. It is a two-day walk up the Bheri River to the nearest Buddhist, Bhotia villages, and it is a day's walk downstream to the nearest Hindu, Nepali-speaking village. Heading south over the two 15,000-foot passes, which lie astride the principal trade and pilgrimage route connecting Tichurong with the rest of Nepal, it is a three-day trip to the nearest villages, inhabited by low-caste Hindus and by Tibeto-Burman speaking farmers, whose language and culture are quite different from that of the Tichurong Magars.

A peculiar demographic shift takes place in winter, when many Tichurong people go south on trading expeditions and are replaced, so to speak, by Bhotias who come south to the relative warmth and prosperity of Tichurong, so that some of the villages acquire a distinctively Tibetan aura during the winter months. Otherwise, although there is much seasonal movement *out* of Tichurong on long-distance trading trips, very few outsiders ever come *into* the valley. Thus because of its fundamentally ecological isolation, to understand Tichurong society and culture it is

sufficient to take account of social relations and ideology as they are observed and expressed in the valley, although as will become clear, external models can and do influence these relations.

Tichurong is not a "linguistic region," since of the thirteen reasonably discrete villages, nine are inhabited by Tibetan-speakers, most of whom call themselves Magars; three are inhabited by Magars speaking a Tibeto-Burman language, called Kaike, spoken nowhere else in the world; and one is inhabited entirely by Nepali-speaking blacksmiths (*kāmi*). There are also a handful of blacksmiths in a few of the Magar villages and one family of tailors (*damāi*) in Tarangpur, a pseudonym for the largest village (eighty houses) in Tichurong, where I gathered the bulk of my data. The blacksmiths and tailors are Hindu in the same common-sense way that such castes are Hindu in India, while the Magars are for most purposes Buddhists, who employ and support both their own resident lamas and visiting Tibetan lamas for a variety of ritual purposes, including life-cycle ceremonies. I say "for most purposes" advisedly because they have become Hinduized in a number of ways, observing such festivals as Dasāi, wearing Nepali clothes instead of Tibetan and so forth.

Thus Magar interaction with Hindus is limited to members of the blacksmith and tailor castes, with whom they do have extensive economic and social dealings. In Tarangpur, one of the largest villages in all Dolpa, all the families have *jajmāni* relations with one or another of the blacksmith families, and some have a similar arrangement with the tailors, to both of whom annual grain payments are given in return for services rendered during the year. These relations are like the *jajmāni* systems described for India, particularly in the north; viz., between families rather than individuals, hereditary, nonmonetary, and involving a number of informal, noneconomic features, such as the gift of clothes from patron to client at the time of the former's wedding. The blacksmiths and tailors have the same status they have elsewhere in Nepal: they are not allowed to enter Magar houses and Magars will not interdine with them. Bhotias are allowed in Magar houses and the two groups do interdine frequently.

From this brief sketch of the social composition of Tichurong there emerges an important fact: in such isolated valleys as this, Hinduism is represented not by a full panoply of castes, nor even by a few castes (cf., Berreman 1963), but by only the lowest, so-called untouchable castes, which in this case number only two, one of which is represented by a single household. There are no Brahmans whatsoever in the valley nor do any ever normally come there; if a stray Brahman did wander in, it would never be for a ritual or religious purpose. A few Thakulis — descendants of high-caste Thakuris who came to Tichurong several generations ago — have become so Magarized (hence the mutant name; since there is only one exogamous lineage of them they always marry Magars) that they

the intellectual route was opened to India, Tibetans seem to have been overwhelmed by Indian thought. The fact that Tibetan letters were made up of Nagari characters must have definitely led Tibetans to the acceptance of Indian thought; the early Korean, Japanese, and Vietnamese intellectuals, on the other hand, depended heavily on the use of Chinese characters in their writings. Nevertheless, the degree of acceptance of Indian thought in its contents as well as its style is indeed surprising. It is well comparable to the case of Korean acceptance of Chinese thought. There seems to be something more here than the fact that India was geographically closer to Tibet: Tibetans must have found something about Indian thought more agreeable to their own social thought and way of life.

Here we must consider the case of the Mongols. Living much closer to China than to India, since the beginning of their history they had constant contacts with the Chinese. Nevertheless, their intellectual inclination was heavily toward Tibetan Buddhism, and unlike the Koreans, Japanese, and Vietnamese, they never accepted Chinese Confucianism or Buddhism. It thus would appear that Chinese thought as represented by Confucianism is more likely to be adopted by a society that is predominantly agricultural and sedentary, whereas Indian thought with its more universal character is more easily acceptable in a society made up of predominantly pastoral elements. Chinese thought is characterized more by the setting up of a frame of references and orders, while Indian thought depends on logical sequences. Although the core of Tibetan civilization had developed in an agricultural area, in the fertile valleys of central Tibet, the traditional life style of the Tibetans was more pastoral. This tendency can also be seen in the fact that throughout its history Tibet maintained a very close affiliation with the Mongols, with whom they hardly felt any need of a border line. Indeed, the fourth Dalai Lama was a Mongol. The life of the Tibetan peasantry and the management of estates finds its closest counterpart in medieval Europe. It was and is a drastically different society from the Far Eastern and Southeast Asian societies which are dominated by wet paddy cultivation. Yet interestingly enough, the Tibetans' patterns of personal behavior and their expression of feeling at personal encounters find, in my view, their closest affinity in these societies, particularly in Japan and Southeast Asia.

Such considerations place Tibet as being unique among Asian societies. It is not a remote and isolated area, but rather a crossroads where various cultural and ecological elements meet.

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Homo hierarchicus Nepalensis: *A Cultural Subspecies*

JAMES F. FISHER

Although the "village study" is still the classic mode of anthropological enquiry, research in complex peasant societies such as those of South Asia inevitably, if often only indirectly, confronts substantive and methodological problems in the choice of appropriate research units. At certain analytic moments, when geographic or conceptual generalizations are advanced, decisions have to be made about the scope of regions. Because regions can be and are differently defined — e.g., in natural, ecological, historical, linguistic, cultural, or structural terms, depending on the problem at hand — the number of "regions" is probably at least as large as the number of scholars who concoct them. It is therefore not surprising that the geographer Norton Ginsberg finally had to concede that, "There is no universally accepted definition of the region, except as it refers to some portion of the surface of the earth" (1967:5). It is perhaps natural that the warmth of regional controversy is directly proportional to the size of the region concerned. At least this seems true of Dumont's almost audaciously ambitious *Homo hierarchicus* (1970), which purports not only to define the essence of the South Asian world but to stake out rather firm conceptual boundaries to it.

However well Dumont's analysis may work in the heart of the subcontinent, one cannot help speculating on its utility at the periphery. After all, the notion of a culturally unique South Asia logically implies not only a conceptually neat and tidily bounded entity but something somewhere beyond it — such as Central Asia — with which it can be contrasted and compared. In this paper I consider the cultural confrontation between South and Central Asia at its Himalayan interface. In Ginsberg's terms, I will take that portion of the surface of the earth conventionally called South Asia and quite literally follow it to an interstitial zone where it shades into, or perhaps collides with, the social and cultural systems of

Central Asia. The interface will be defined and discussed in terms of this confrontation. In other words, this brief essay will be a test of limits, both geographic and conceptual. The full data are being prepared for presentation elsewhere; here just enough detail will be offered to make the case plausible.

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From this brief sketch of the social composition of Tichurong there emerges an important fact: in such isolated valleys as this, Hinduism is represented not by a full panoply of castes, nor even by a few castes (cf., Berreman 1963), but by only the lowest, so-called untouchable castes, which in this case number only two, one of which is represented by a single household. There are no Brahmans whatsoever in the valley nor do any ever normally come there; if a stray Brahman did wander in, it would never be for a ritual or religious purpose. A few Thakulis — descendants of high-caste Thakuris who came to Tichurong several generations ago — have become so Magarized (hence the mutant name; since there is only one exogamous lineage of them they always marry Magars) that they

should be regarded, and so regard themselves, as completely absorbed by Magar society. In other words, Hinduism in this case has been decapitated socially and enervated religiously. Some of its ideas are known and are powerful, because they are known to be the ideas at the source of political and social power in other parts of Nepal visited during winter trading trips, but it exists "on the ground" only in an extremely truncated form.

In addition to this intercaste stratification the Magars are further divided among themselves in several ways. First, most of them (especially in Tarangpur) belong to one of four named, exogamous, patrilineal clans, — Rokaya, Budha, Garti, and Jankri — and all but the Gartis are further subdivided into smaller lineages, all but two of which are exogamous. The Rokayas, Budhas, and Gartis are descendants of the three sons of the aboriginal founding goddess, from whom they learned the Kaike language. The Jankris represent a later, but still mythical, addition to the three primordial clans. As in Pignède (1962) there are Hindu (but in the Tichurong case, not Brahman) components to the myth, but there are specifically Tibetan and Magar elements also — one of the three sons of the goddess married a Magar, one married a Tibetan, and the third married a Thakuri. The implications of this fourfold classification would be interesting to explore from Allen's (this volume) point of view (unlike the cases he considers, the clans discussed here are and always have been, as far as I can tell, entirely without function or rank). But of greater importance for the present concern with hierarchy is the existence of ranked groups which partially crosscut these unranked clans.

Most of the Magar population of Tarangpur — the Thakulis and a few other recent immigrants marginal to the system are exceptions — claim membership in one of the four clans or, more accurately, claim one of the four clan names, since the clans are not corporate groups to which one can belong in the usual sense. But each individual is simultaneously a member of an unnamed, endogamous, ranked group which, for lack of a better term, I call a marriage class. Members of the same marriage class may do two things with each other which are proscribed to others: (1) intermarry and (2) eat food (or drink liquid) which has come into contact, directly or indirectly, with each other's mouths. Commensality, in the Indian intercaste sense, is totally irrelevant.

In the village of Tarangpur there are four such marriage classes: the highest ranking one consists of the bulk of the population and is composed for the most part of old, established families. Each of the four clans, as well as the Thakulis, is included in this class. The second and third classes are largely single lineages (each with one of the four clan names) whose founders arrived in historical times. One of these groups is called the Palpali Budhas, since the founder was a soldier who wandered through Tichurong on his way to war with Tibet in the nineteenth century,

from Palpa, in southern Nepal. The other group consists of families whose men often serve as lamas; these families also are descended from relatively recent arrivals, lamas who were invited to the village to serve its inhabitants when Buddhism began to strengthen its hold on the valley a few generations ago. The fourth class is not so much a group as a miscellaneous collection of individuals who for various reasons have been expelled (or are descendants from such social rejects) from their marriage class. From the perspective of Tarangpur society, most of the other "Magars" of Tichurong form a largely undifferentiated mass, some of whom they regard as more like Bhotias, and some of whom are more like themselves but not even of the lowest rank of Tarangpur marriage classes. All of these rankings make invidious distinctions the Magars prefer to conceal, and the fact of marriage class membership is not admitted or discussed openly as is different clan or ethnic group membership.

The only obvious criterion for marriage class membership is descent, but descent from what? Certainly not from the original ancestors, since descendants of immigrants who have arrived in historical and remembered times have been admitted to the highest marriage class. The highest marriage class is a little like an exclusive club, since given enough time, membership in it can be literally bought. But the restrictive rules (against intermarriage and defilement through saliva contact) are firm, and the consequences of violation — disbarment from the marriage class — are irrevocable, at least over the short and medium run. There are no Brahmans or, for that matter, any other ritual specialists who can erase such transgressions. Concepts of purity and pollution are very clearly at work here, but they seem devoid of the peculiarly religious foundation with which Dumont is so centrally concerned.

The existence of this Brahmanless, almost but not quite casteless system poses interesting questions for Dumont's theory, which demands a dichotomy between power and status, with Brahmans at the apex of the resultant hierarchy. Instead, the anthropological scatterbelt of Tichurong includes only Magars, Bhotias, and untouchables, but none of the higher Hindu castes. At the behavioral level, interaction between the "ethnic groups" of Tichurong seems very castelike: strict commensal restrictions separate Magars and untouchables, and there is no intermarriage between the three groups. There should be no marriage between marriage classes either, but whereas these rules are sometimes broken by an individual who does not mind forfeiting membership in his marriage class, intermarriage between the three major ethnic groups would be simply unthinkable. On the other hand, there is little division of labor; everyone, including blacksmiths and lamas, farms and trades. Magars can and often do sew their own clothes; they can and do provide for their own carpentry requirements; they do not work iron or gold simply because they lack the requisite technological skills. Resident village lamas (as opposed to itin-

erant Bhotia or Tibetan refugee lamas from the north) are almost always hereditary members of the lama marriage class, but many men of this marriage class are not practicing lamas (always an advantage to lama families, since such men are then free to pursue secular work, such as plowing, which is forbidden to practicing lamas) and play no ritual role at all, while men from other marriage classes may and do perform as lamas if they are interested and motivated enough to learn how to read classical Tibetan and to perform the rituals. And there is the hierarchical marriage system with its own rules of operation.

Whatever the merits of Dumont's scheme in India, it does not seem to fit this trans-Himalayan case very well. The traditonal view is that caste is a much more loosely integrated, casual, less strictly enforced and regulated system in the hills than in the plains. The evidence for this view rests largely on the prevalence of such phenomena as intercaste marriage and lack of outcasteing. But from this perspective, Tichurong is not less severe but more. In terms of marriage classes, the power of pollution is even stronger, and prohibition against it even stricter than in traditional plains culture, which has been conventionally considered, by Berreman (1963) and others, more orthodox and rigid. And yet without the religion of Brahmanism, the basis for the hierarchy must be sought elsewhere. Dumont is correct in asserting that "the pure is powerless in face of the impure and only the sacred vanquishes it" (1970:140), but in Tichurong the vanquishing sacred does not exist in either behavior or ideology. Thus the social system of Tichurong is rigidly stratified in a way that differs in important respects, including its ideological basis, from that of village India.

By Dumont's own edict (1970:6), people do not simply behave, they act with ideas in their heads. Our question must be, then, just that: what are the ideas in their heads? Or, if "the caste is a *state of mind*" (1970: 34), then what is the state of mind that generates this kind of distinctly castelike behavior in Tichurong? On the one hand, certain interactional behavior is thought of as polluting (in different ways according to the different levels involved), although the term "degrading" might more accurately characterize these behaviors. But, on the other hand, the ideology does not seem to be cast in the religious terms Dumont proposes: "Hierarchy culminates in the Brahmans, or priest" (1970:251). Brahmans do not dispense purity because they are not in the system. This is not to say that these Magars have never heard of Brahmans. They have not only heard of them, they have even seen them; they know that they are regarded as a high caste, but only in the most casual interactional terms. Religiously they mean nothing at all; how could they, without place or presence in the ritual and religious systems of Tichurong?

Instead of the ideology of Brahmanic Hinduism, an ideology strongly influenced by Lamaism prevails. The social ideology of Lamaism is yet to

be adequately described; although it is not egalitarian, it seems conspicuously different from the Indian pattern, and the religious/politico-economic dualism is absent. Indigenous concepts of purity and pollution exist (cf., Ortner 1973), but not in any way which might be called encompassing. Rank is assigned to different segments of society, but in a seemingly stratified, rather than hierarchical (in Dumont's terms), way. Unlike either India or Tibet, the priests — in this case called lamas — are ranked near the bottom of the hierarchy, rather than at the top. We might conclude that all this only proves that the caste system does not exist under this kind of Buddhism, although it does under Buddhism elsewhere, as in Ceylon (cf., Yalman 1960), a conclusion often assumed as a first principle in discussions of Tibetan Buddhism anyway. But the blacksmiths and tailors of Tichurong are Hindu castes and treated as such; they are not merely similar to blacksmiths and tailors elsewhere in Nepal, they are exactly the same, a fact made clear from their relations of kinship and affinity with them.

Thus Hindu castes and Buddhist ideology combine to form a kind of anthropological double helix, a complex code which programs the social and cultural life of Tichurong. Whether we call it Hinduism without Brahmans, or untouchable Hinduism, or caste Buddhism, we cannot avoid the fact that Indic ideology, whether formulated in traditional varna terms or as a single, encompassing, pure/impure opposition, cannot explain the behavior or ideology of Tichurong. Neither, for that matter, given the castelike features and the low rank of lamas, can the ideology of Tibetan Buddhism satisfactorily account for this convoluted situation. Dumont's central position seems to be that the caste system cannot properly exist outside of India because the Hindu value system is found only there; but he would presumably agree that in Tichurong there persists "*something of caste despite the modification in their ideas or values*. Caste is weakened or incomplete, but not lacking altogether" (1970:210).

What little division of labor exists is not hierarchical, at least not in the Indian way. Carrying manure to the fields, for example, is regarded as polluting, but along sexual rather than caste lines; that is, women carry manure and men do not. On the other hand, other kinds of work, such as plowing, are regarded not as pure or impure, but as sinful or not sinful. Along this axis it is women and lamas who do not plow while men, unless they are lamas, do plow. Thus the moral division of labor rests in part on ideological oppositions not relevant to the occupationally based caste specialization of India.

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upper class with an innate quality of purity," as Fürer-Haimendorf put it in a similar conclusion about the Apa Tanis (1971:27).

Varna theory simply includes nothing relevant to these groups. And if religious purity is not the basis of caste rank, then the notion of groups encompassing each other in a hierarchy of purity must be discarded also. Castes and marriage classes are certainly ranked, and it is clear which group is higher or lower than another, but they are ranked in what Dumont might call a more sociocentric, stratified way. In terms of the ideological underpinning of rank, the Tichurong situation is perhaps closer to that of traditional Tibet, where ranked endogamous groups also exist along with proscriptions on certain kinds of labor based on, among other things, religious categories such as sin.

The Tichurong case is nevertheless not identical to that of Tibet either, because of the existence of Hindu castes and the ritual avoidance of them. Thus, the total complex of ideology and behavior seems to conform to neither the Indian nor the Tibetan models; instead it contains elements of both plus its own distinctive Magar characteristics. It must be understood and analyzed in its own terms, and references to other external systems can never adequately explain the Tichurong data.

This conclusion is based on an assumption which should be made explicit: that Tichurong, isolated and ingrown (with few exceptions: if one is born there, one dies there), is an integrated sociocultural system and not a haphazard collection of different ethnic units each with different ideology and behavior. While this assumption seems axiomatic to me, even if it were not I do not see how anthropological analysis could proceed without it.

Another assumption not so well founded is that there is a clearly defined and bounded group called Magar. In fact, Magar is more of a status summation that can be claimed in this part of Nepal by virtually anyone except untouchables, and I use the term as ethnographic shorthand, not to describe a specific social or cultural type. In my view, and I think in the view of the people of Tichurong, the Tichurong Magars are not really Magars to be equated with those elsewhere in Nepal; they use the term simply as a convenient label that readily identifies to an outsider roughly where, in the pan-Nepal hierarchy of tribes and castes, they belong. By making ethnic labels a substantive issue and by reifying unified identities and traditions where none exist, one risks almost ignoring the existential fact that these mountain peasants — probably as analytically useful a label as any — just live their lives and do as they have learned to do and as circumstances seem to them to dictate. The universal practice of labeling and classifying the peoples of Nepal primarily as this or that tribe or caste needs considerable rethinking.

Finally, one argument against using Tichurong data at all in this context is that the situation is so marginal to traditional Hindu caste society that it

cannot be usefully assimilated to the debate on the nature of caste. The same argument has been lodged against Berreman's analysis of caste, but his stance is not unique, and Fürer-Haimendorf (1966) and Leach (1960) and their colleagues have shown how fruitful it can be to examine the periphery of the caste world. In my view such positions are productive and heuristic; it is the exceptional, limiting case which can best serve to test the utility of a concept or theory. Such a case can be the acid test of a set of ideas, the litmus which brings out through contrasts its ambiguities and limitations.

In summary, Tichurong is perhaps typical of the closely compacted multiethnicity found in other high Himalayan valleys. These areas are influenced by multiple models which provide a pool of alternative traits, structures, and symbols to draw upon. The social and cultural systems in such fringe areas do not go together in expected and predictable ways, and the meaning of social action cannot be assumed a priori in such contact zones. Summaries of the culture of Nepal inevitably but correctly observe that it is a meeting place of two great traditions. I have attempted here to sketch the implications of this confrontation for a group marginal to both the traditions it straddles.

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Hierarchy or Stratification? Two Case Studies from Nepal and East Africa

A. PATRICIA CAPLAN

THE PROBLEM

The purpose of this paper is first of all to find a framework for a meaningful comparison of two systems of institutionalized inequality: one in a Muslim village, Minazini, on the coast of East Africa (Caplan 1969, 1975), and the second in a Hindu village, Duari, in the far western hills of Nepal (Caplan 1972). Secondly, I want to analyze some of the effects of certain social changes that have been taking place and to put forward a very tentative hypothesis to explain why the two societies have responded differently.

THE CONCEPTS

Inequality, a term I deliberately leave vague and undefined, has been discussed very fully by students of South Asian societies — particularly, of course, Hindu societies. As Black (1972) points out, it sometimes is assumed that Islam is a religion of egalitarianism, and as such is contrasted with Hinduism, whose ideology is patently nonegalitarian. However, some studies carried out recently in Islamic societies (e.g., Bujra 1971) indicate that in at least certain parts of the Muslim world there exist highly institutionalized forms of inequality.

Dumont (1967, 1970) distinguished two separate aspects of inequality — what he terms "hierarchy" on the one hand, and "stratification" on the other — and I want to use these two terms in discussing the problem stated above. Hierarchy is concerned with cultural criteria, particularly with ideology and values, while stratification refers to structural criteria, particularly economic and political power relations.

Dumont was writing about caste, and part of his argument is that caste is essentially a cultural phenomenon, a product of the Hindu value system, based on concepts of pollution and purity, and that the term cannot therefore be applied outside of Hindu society. Thus, he says, one cannot apply the term "caste" to the study of, say, race relations in the United States (as Berreman and other anthropologists have done). I am not proposing to get involved in this aspect of his argument, namely whether or not caste is a purely Hindu phenomenon, but merely to see how useful his distinction between hierarchy and stratification may be in the study of my two societies. I hope to show that while Minazini is not part of a caste society, inequality there *is* comparable with inequality in Nepal.

THE DISTINCTION

Nepal

Let us first examine the distinction between Dumont's two concepts in a Hindu society. The village of Duari, in Belaspur District of the far western hills of Nepal, contains a population of just over 1,000 people. Just under half of these are untouchables. The remainder of the population are high caste Brahmans (about 15 percent), Jaisis (children of Brahman widows who have remarried — about 30 percent), and Chetris, or Kshatriyas (about 5 percent). There are thus no middle range castes, only twice-born and untouchables. All the villagers are primarily farmers, and all own some land. The Brahmans also serve the village and a very large area around it as priests. Because of this, they are the wealthiest people in the village. The untouchables are the poorest (Figure 1).

DUARI, Nepal (Belaspur District)	MINAZINI, Tanzania (Mafia Island District)
Brahmans	Gunya Sharifs
Jaisis	Arabs and Zanzibaris
Chetris	Mbwera
	Pokomo
Untouchables	
	Slaves

Figure 1.

At the district level, however, it is the Chetris who form what Indianists generally term a "dominant" caste: they are the wealthiest, hold the most political power, and are also the most numerous. Thus, in the context of Belaspur District, Dumont's distinction between hierarchy (that of caste) and stratification (that of economic and political power) would seem to be

valid. In other words, the fact that the Chetris are "dominant" does not affect the fact that they are ranked below the Brahmans and Jaisis in the hierarchy of caste.

In the village of Duari, the Brahmans form the top rank of the hierarchy (rank referring to position in the hierarchy); they also control most of the land and the political power, and thus have the highest status in the village (status meaning position in the stratification system).

Here, however, a distinction must be made. There is a vertical cleavage in the village based on clan affiliation and reinforced by separate residence. The largest clan in the village, the Regmi clan, consists of Brahmans, Jaisis, and Chetris. The Regmi clan consists of about half of the high caste population, or just under a quarter of the total village population. The other grouping consists of what I propose to term a coalition of small clans (to avoid using yet another local term), and this, too, includes Brahmans, Jaisis, and Chetris. (The untouchables, who are not members of clans, play no part in this vertical cleavage.) The Brahmans of Duari, as a category, do form the wealthiest stratum; they also have more political power than any other caste. But this has to be qualified by saying that while wealth is fairly evenly distributed between the Regmi and the non-Regmi Brahmans, only the Regmis hold political power; the non-Regmi Brahmans play no part in politics. However, both Regmi and non-Regmi Jaisis are active politically. Lack of political power does not, however, affect the *rank* of the non-Regmi Brahmans. So at this level, again, Dumont's distinction holds true.

East Africa

On the coast, long subject to influence from the Arabian peninsula, there is a hierarchy of Arabs, particularly Sharifs (descendants of the Prophet), freeborn coastal Muslims, and descendants of slaves. This is based on an ideology of *nasab* [descent] which is certainly not egalitarian, and in which it is somewhat difficult to distinguish racial and religious values. Arabs are, or rather were until very recently, considered to be superior to non-Arabs. Sharifs, in this area as in others, are accorded a peculiar respect: "Reverence and respect ought therefore always to be shown to the *ashraf* [Sharifs] especially to the pious and learned among them; this is a natural result of reverence for the Prophet. . . . The 'sons of the Prophet of God' may be certain of divine forgiveness and any wrong inflicted by them must be accepted like a dispensation of Allah, if possible with gratitude" (Gibb and Kramers 1961:532). Slaves, on the other hand, were freed only in this century, and there were quite a few people on Mafia Island who had once been slaves themselves.

Throughout the east coast and islands there are variations on the

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East Africa

On the coast, long subject to influence from the Arabian peninsula, there is a hierarchy of Arabs, particularly Sharifs (descendants of the Prophet), freeborn coastal Muslims, and descendants of slaves. This is based on an ideology of *nasab* [descent] which is certainly not egalitarian, and in which it is somewhat difficult to distinguish racial and religious values. Arabs are, or rather were until very recently, considered to be superior to non-Arabs. Sharifs, in this area as in others, are accorded a peculiar respect: "Reverence and respect ought therefore always to be shown to the *ashraf* [Sharifs] especially to the pious and learned among them; this is a natural result of reverence for the Prophet. . . . The 'sons of the Prophet of God' may be certain of divine forgiveness and any wrong inflicted by them must be accepted like a dispensation of Allah, if possible with gratitude" (Gibb and Kramers 1961:532). Slaves, on the other hand, were freed only in this century, and there were quite a few people on Mafia Island who had once been slaves themselves.

Throughout the east coast and islands there are variations on the

hierarchy described above. Janet Bujra's northern Kenya village is an example (Bujra 1968); here the hierarchy is Sharifs, freeborn, and ex-slaves. Here, as in Nepal, a distinction can be made between rank and status, for the Sharifs, although they are the richest people in the village, have no political power at all.

In the village of Minazini, and on the island of Mafia as a whole, the hierarchy is somewhat more complex (Figure 1). The highest rank is held by those considered to be most "like Arabs." These are all immigrants, one group from the northern Kenya coast (which includes a Sharif and his sister), the other group from Zanzibar, including a Shaikh. The middle ranks are formed by the freeborn, who are of two types — the Mbwera and the Pokomo. The latter are somewhat lower in rank than the former. The lowest rank is held by the descendants of slaves.

In this situation, position in the hierarchy and control of political and economic power diverges even more sharply than in Nepal. Control of economic resources is not in the hands of any one category in the hierarchy; there are rich and poor in all ranks. Until recently, political power has been in the hands of people of high rank who controlled the mosque and the Koran schools, namely the Shaikh and certain of the Mbwera. The Pokomo, on the other hand, did not until recently participate in mosque or formal village politics, but were immersed in their spirit-possession guilds. These institutions are not considered "respectable," and their activities are condemned by the more orthodox, who are mostly those of higher rank. The Pokomo themselves, who are of course Muslims, generally agree with this condemnation, and the village as a whole sees the spirit-possession cults, in spite of the wealth and informal power held by its leaders, as being "peripheral" (Lewis 1966, 1971).

To sum up, in both societies one can distinguish between the rank of a category in the hierarchy (based on inegalitarian ideologies), and its status in the system of stratification (based on wealth and political power). Let us now look at the way in which status and rank — stratification and hierarchy — are interrelated. Dumont has argued that in a caste society, rank in the hierarchy "encompasses" status in the stratification system. "In every society, one aspect of social life receives a primary value stress and simultaneously is made to encompass all others and express them as far as it can" (Dumont 1967:33). In other words in a caste society, as he has defined it, the hierarchy is the most important factor; the stratification system, based on power, while not unimportant, is secondary to hierarchy. Perhaps I can clarify this by reference to the Indian material. Numerous accounts have been given of untouchable castes in India which have tried to "Sanskritize," i.e., to adopt the symbols of higher castes. But in every case thus far recorded, they have failed in their objective of raising their rank, for no matter how exalted a life style they adopted — becoming vegetarians, giving up alcohol, chang-

ing their occupations, etc. — other castes refused to treat them as anything but untouchables (e.g. Bailey 1957, 1964; Lynch 1969). At the other end of the scale, we may take the example of the political anti-Brahman movement in South India which has largely deprived the Brahmans of their wealth and power, but not their rank (Beteille 1965).

But this is typical only of a caste society. Dumont argues conversely that in a noncaste society, it is the stratification system, based on wealth and power, that is paramount, i.e., which "encompasses" the hierarchy. The hierarchy in Muslim Minazini is obviously not based on the same pollution/purity concepts as in Nepal. It is based on an ideology of descent. But whereas in Nepal a change in status in the stratification system through the acquisition of wealth or power does not substantially affect rank in the hierarchy, in the East African system such a change in status can be translated into rank in the hierarchy. This is evidenced by the system of intermarriage.

In Nepal, caste endogamy is preferred, but hypergamous marriage is also extremely common. In such marriages, the children take the caste of their mothers, although they retain the clan of their fathers. But such marriages can take place only above the pollution line: until recently, any sexual relations between high castes and untouchables were severely punished by law, and the few instances that occurred in Duari village resulted in the flight to India of the couples concerned.

Hypogamy at any caste level is not sanctioned, and in the very few instances I encountered, it was kept secret insofar as possible. It was usually the result of a married woman running off with a man of a lower caste. So, no matter how powerful or wealthy a Chetri or Jaisi may be, he cannot hope to marry a Brahman girl.

On the East African coast, hypergamous marriage is also common, and the children retain the rank of their father. This is true even in Mafia, where there is a nonunilineal kinship system. But under certain conditions, hypogamy is also possible, and the gap even between ex-slaves and freeborn can sometimes be bridged. For example, in the village of Minazini, two ex-slaves were married to freeborn women. These were two brothers who had been "adopted" by a freeborn woman as her "brothers." She had educated them, and they appear to have inherited property from her. No other ex-slaves were educated or wealthy, and consequently none of them were married to women of higher rank.

At the opposite end of the scale, the position of the Shaikh is also interesting. A Shaikh is a learned man, a teacher, and a leader. He does not necessarily become a Shaikh by virtue of his descent, although a son frequently succeeds his father. A Sharif on the other hand remains a Sharif even if he is poor and ignorant. This was true of the Sharif in Minazini. He had allowed his sister, a Sharifa, to be married to the Shaikh. Such a union might be termed hypogamous in the context of the

Islamic ideal hierarchy, but in the village it was considered a marriage between equals. But these instances of hypogamy, it may be noted, took place between people of proximate rank in the hierarchy, not between the top and the bottom ranks.

THE INTRODUCTION OF VILLAGE COUNCIL SYSTEMS

In order to examine more fully the interrelationship between hierarchy and stratification, I want to look at certain changes that have taken place in the two villages in the past ten years, particularly the introduction of universally elected village councils.

Nepal

In this area, population pressures have become acute in the last two generations. Until recently, there was also an acute shortage of cash needed to purchase goods imported from India, particularly cloth. Most cash was brought into the village by Brahman priests — from Duari who had a monopoly of priestly services over a very wide area. They used their cash to buy land directly, or else lent it out in return for land mortgages. In this way they continued to acquire land, while the untouchables continued to lose it. However, no untouchable lost all of his land; some had only enough to be able to grow a few months' food, but no one was entirely landless, as they were in certain parts of India. Untouchables thus were dependent upon high caste villagers, especially Brahmans, for loans of money and grain. Many of them, in return for interest-free loans, bound themselves to work for Brahmans until they could pay off their debts and redeem their lands. For some, the only way out of the vicious circle was to migrate to India in search of paid employment with which to repay loans and buy necessities. Needless to say, the untouchables had scarcely any political power at this time. The village had a headman, who was responsible for collecting taxes and settling minor disputes. The post of headman seems to have been held alternately by members of the two major high caste clan groupings in the village.

The economic situation changed after the revolution in Nepal in 1950, in which the existing regime was overthrown. Attempts have been made since then to improve administration, and this has resulted in a huge increase in the number of government offices and officials in the nearby district capital (L. Caplan 1975). It has also meant that the district capital has vastly expanded as a trading center. This has affected the village economy in several ways. Many high caste villagers have found jobs in government offices as clerks, etc. Naturally, they are paid in cash. And untouchables have found unskilled jobs as builders of the new shops,

offices, and houses in the capital, or else as porters to bring in goods from the plains to the south. Thus, a lot more cash has entered the economy.

At the same time, relations between high castes and untouchables in the village have changed. The latter are no longer entirely dependent upon the former for loans or grain wages, and very few now bind themselves as plowmen. If they work at all for the high castes, it is as day laborers. But if possible they prefer to work in the district capital, where wages are higher. In any case, they now prefer to work for cash, not grain, because they can take their money and go to the plains, where they can buy grain much more cheaply than they can locally. For several reasons, the high castes have not resisted this tendency. The first is that they, too, are feeling the pressures of insufficient land, and they say that they can no longer afford to pay grain wages; they need the grain to feed their own families. And the wealthier ones are no longer investing as much in land; some of them prefer to open shops in the capital. In short, the village economy has become part of a wider economy, and very dependent upon the district capital. In this process, the old relationship between untouchables and high castes has also changed, and has ceased to be one of total interdependence.

In the early 1960's a panchayat, or council system, was introduced in Nepal. At first, the village headman retained his position and functions, and the new village council emerged, composed largely of Regmis, who were not elected. Few other than Regmis were interested in becoming members, and most villagers thought that the new system would be as short-lived as the previous period of parliamentary democracy. By the time that the terms of the first councillors and chairman had expired, however, the situation was different. The functions of the old headman had now been vested in the village council chairman. In addition, this office had been invested with other powers. In particular, it was supposed to deal with the new land reform program, and also with development money given to the village council by the district council. Competition for the post of council chairman became intense, and an election was held. The winner was the former village headman, leader of the coalition of non-Regmi clans. He defeated the Regmi candidate, who had held the chairmanship prior to this election.

The Regmis reacted by trying to get this chairman thrown out of office. They circulated a petition accusing him of all kinds of illegal behavior, and succeeded in inducing a large number of villagers of all castes and clans to sign it. The chairman was suspended from office. However, at a meeting of the whole village held to consider the charges against the chairman, the untouchables, many of whom had signed the petition, claimed that the Regmis had misled them by telling them that this was a petition about land reform. The charges against the chairman were dropped, and his term of office expired shortly afterwards.

Another election was held in 1969. This time another Regmi stood for chairman, and defeated, albeit narrowly, the former chairman (i.e., the ex-headman). The voting patterns revealed quite a new cleavage in the village: it was by this time on horizontal and not vertical lines, with the high castes of all clans supporting the Regmi candidate, and the untouchables supporting the ex-chairman.

That the untouchables felt able to act in defiance of the wishes of the majority of the high castes is indicative of the degree to which they had ceased to be economically dependent upon them. This had not always been so. A few years before, the ex-headman had started a school in his area of the village. As many of the people living there are untouchables, so were many of the pupils. But the high castes put pressure on the untouchables, and forced them to withdraw their children from the school by threatening dire economic consequences. By 1969, the untouchables were not only economically much more independent, but they also possessed the vote, and their large numbers made them a key factor in an election. They were, in fact, wooed by candidates of both sides.

In the terms I am using here, the untouchables have obtained more power than they had previously held, and although as yet they have no leader of their own, they have shown that they are a force to be reckoned with, not ignored, in village politics.

Shortly after this 1969 election, a village general assembly was held. The untouchables put forward a motion that they should be allowed to use not only the springs, but also the wells in the village. They are not allowed to do so because well water is still, and it is believed that if it were touched by the hands or bucket of an untouchable, the water would become impure and could not then be used by any of the high castes. This motion was deflected by certain high caste men who proposed instead that another spring should be constructed which would serve the untouchables.

At the following meeting, a motion was brought by a high caste man claiming that untouchables were eating cattle carcasses, and proposing that they should be punished for so doing. (Cattle are not eaten by caste Hindus, although dead beasts normally are consumed by untouchables.) However, at this time there had been an epidemic, and some thirty beasts had died in the village. Naturally, the untouchables were called upon to dispose of the carcasses, and it is possible that they did so by eating the flesh. Some people tried to maintain that in Duari the untouchables traditionally did not actually eat carrion beef; others said that they should not eat the carcasses of animals that had died of disease. This however was irrelevant. The untouchables' request to drink from the village wells was being answered in the same idiom, namely that of hierarchy. By bringing up the matter of eating cattle carcasses, the high castes were drawing attention to the polluting and repugnant practices of the

untouchables, and thereby implying how unfit such people were to use the same water sources as high castes. Thus, the untouchables had tried to turn their political power into a hierarchical idiom, and had been answered in kind.

Mafia

I now turn to the events which followed the introduction of a village council system in Tanzania. As in Nepal, previously there had been a village headman who was responsible for collecting taxes, but who had very few other functions and little power. However, the new village council, and particularly its leading officials, the chairman, the secretary, and the representative to the Mafia District Council, had a new role to play in the village. Like the panchayats in Nepal, Tanzanian councils collect taxes and also control and channel development money. In addition, their officials act as a liaison between villagers and government officials at the district headquarters. In Tanzania, councils have the additional function of serving as a court. Offices in the council system are much sought after as an important means of gaining power, both economic and political.

A situation similar to that in Nepal had prevailed when the system was first introduced. People did not understand the functions of the new bodies, and were not interested in becoming members. This applied to the majority of villagers, but not to the highest ranking people, who quickly realized that in order to retain the power they already had, they would have to control the new offices. Accordingly, as in Nepal, a new council "emerged" in the village composed largely of people of the highest rank. The council chairman was the Sharif, who, in spite of his youth, his lack of learning and piety, and his poverty was still accorded the greatest respect, and it was felt that he was the most suitable candidate for this post.

Initially, no men of Pokomo descent, i.e., of low rank, sought office, or even attended council meetings. But it soon became apparent to all villagers that very real benefits accrued from holding formal office. Not only did officials have considerable power because of their judicial functions, they were also the only people likely to be considered for loans from the newly formed (and government-backed) cooperative society; and loans were the only new source of income.

Accordingly, there was soon competition for political posts, and just as happened in Nepal, the cleavage was a horizontal one. In 1966 an election was held for the post of village representative on the Mafia District Council. The two candidates were the incumbent, a man of very high rank who was the brother-in-law of both the Shaikh and the Sharif, and a Pokomo who was very active in the spirit-possession guilds. To most

people's surprise, the Pokomo lost the election by only a handful of votes.

Since 1967, there has also been an election for the post of village chairman, an office which is even more eagerly sought after than that of representative. This time, however, the election was won by the Pokomo candidate, a man of considerable status, since he is quite wealthy and a successful trader, but who is also the most renowned spirit-possession singer in northern Mafia. As I have pointed out earlier, the Pokomo constitute only about 45 percent of the Minazini population; so to win this election the Pokomo must have received votes from some non-Pokomo.

ANALYSIS

Let us now discuss the changes that have taken place in these two societies in terms of the distinction between hierarchy and stratification, and then discuss Bailey's model of social change (1969) in this context.

What is the interrelationship between status and rank? There is little doubt that in practice, power tends to flow from rank. In Hindu society, it is meritorious to give to Brahmans; accordingly many of them become wealthy simply because they are Brahmans. It is interesting to note that in both Duari and Minazini the people of highest rank are said to have been recent settlers. In Minazini, it is said that the father of the present Shaikh was found wandering on the seashore and was invited to settle; he was given land, coconut trees, and a wife. Similarly, in Duari, the high castes are supposed to have arrived long after the untouchables were already settled there, and are supposed to have been given land by them.

The people of highest rank in both societies have also been in a strong position to obtain economic and political power for another important reason — they had a monopoly of literacy. In Belaspur, almost every Brahman can read and write Nepali, while perhaps fewer than half of the Jaisis and Chetris, and almost no untouchables are literate. The same is true of Mafia — those of high rank are all literate in the Arabic script. Literacy in both societies brings many benefits; it makes a man able to act as a channel of communication between the government and illiterate villagers, which obviously leads to tremendous power and often to great financial advantages.

Furthermore, the ideology states that people of high rank are the most suited to rule, and accordingly, even after voting was introduced, the majority of villagers at first automatically voted for people of high rank, while those who had no high rank did not even consider running as candidates. But what of the reverse side of the coin? Does rank flow from power? In both of our societies, a new source of power had emerged — the vote — and in both societies, people of low rank who formerly had

played no part in politics are in a strong position demographically, constituting just under half of the population.

Furthermore, at the time of the introduction of the village council system, economic variables in both villages were in a sense "neutral." By this I mean that in Nepal the untouchables are no longer dependent upon the high castes, and thus are in a position to act independently. In Mafia, people of low rank have long been just as rich (or as poor) as people of higher rank. Thus, in neither society are people of high rank able to threaten others of lower rank with economic sanctions if the latter refuse them political support, as has been the case in parts of India.

To summarize the main similarities between the two villages: Both are part of a society in which inequality is institutionalized. In both societies, village council systems have been introduced recently, and all villagers, irrespective of status or rank, have been given a new political resource — the vote. In both villages, the major groupings — high castes and untouchables in Nepal, Pokomo and Mbwera in Mafia — are almost equal in number, with a slight advantage in the number of the higher ranked groupings in both cases. In both villages, competition for political posts, and particularly the post of village chairman, has become intense, and has resulted in cleavages along horizontal lines.

Let us turn now to Bailey's model of social change (1969). He has maintained that in a closed society, roles are involute; that is to say, there is summation of status. Conflict, and thence social change, occurs when "contradiction" takes place, that is to say, when roles cease to be involute. Bailey posits a model of two "structures" (his word) — that of structure A, the village, a closed system, and that of structure B, the external environment. He sees the Indian village, structure A, with its caste ideology and status summation, as being impinged upon by structure B, involving new laws, many favoring untouchables, courts, political parties, etc., and says that if any part of structure B contradicts any part of structure A with which it comes into contact, then there will have to be social change. He has thus argued that people who cannot find what they want inside their own society, the village, will tend increasingly to look outside it. Thus, for example, in his own studies (Bailey 1957, 1964) he has shown how the traditional mechanism of Sanskritization brought the rank of the Boad distillers into line with their new economic status. But the Boad outcastes, who are below the pollution line, have been unable to Sanskritize, and hence they are tending to look outside the village.

However, this seems to suggest that structure B offers a viable alternative. Lynch (1969), in a study of untouchables in Agra city has demonstrated that this is not so. Wealthy cobblers who failed to rise in rank, in spite of economic power and efforts at Sanskritization, have converted to Buddhism in large numbers, and have also founded their own political party. In spite of these measures, in their dealings with people outside

their own group, their status as citizens of India, Buddhists, economically independent men, etc., remains secondary to their rank as untouchables.

Let us look more closely at the relationship between the two villages and the external environment. One feature of the external environment in both cases is the court system — villagers make frequent use of the formal courts, which in both areas have been in operation for many years. In Mafia today, the courts are not willing to uphold the old hierarchical ideology, as was evidenced by a court case just prior to my arrival. In a village to the south of Minazini, a self-help scheme had been initiated; indeed, such schemes had been started throughout Tanzania. One of the villagers there, a man of high rank, apparently refused to work on the scheme, and gave as his reason the fact of his rank "as the son of a Shaikh"; he claimed that neither he nor other people of similar rank should be forced to do such work. The court took a dim view of this, and he was punished.

In Nepal, the new constitution and legal code state that caste offenses are no longer punishable by law, indeed that they are not justiciable in the courts. But during my stay, a caste case was brought up in court and admitted for trial in the category of "slander." It involved an alleged sexual relationship between an untouchable woman and a Jaisi man, and roused extremely strong feelings. On the other hand, during my stay in Tanzania several marriages took place between men of extremely low rank and girls of high rank. For example, two TANU (Tanganyika African National Union) workers who were sent into the village were youths from the south of the island, and rumored to be of slave descent. However, they both succeeded in marrying girls of the highest rank in the village. In another village, a similar marriage took place, and when I asked about this, people explained that such a marriage might formerly have been considered reprehensible, since the disparity in rank was so great, but that now "things are different," and that these have become "big men." "Besides," they added, "are we not all Africans now?"

The point is that in both societies similar innovations, like universal suffrage and equal rights for all, have aroused very different responses. In Nepal, there has been accommodation but not much real change in social relations between castes. Administrators are men of high caste; many of the administrators with whom Duari people have to deal are high caste men of their own village who hold posts in the capital. Or else they are the clients of Duari Brahmans, and much more inclined to favor them than to favor untouchables. In other words, structure B as a viable alternative to structure A does not exist, inasmuch as the ideology of structure A, caste, still informs the wider society. From most of the material at present available, this would seem to be still true even of India.

In Tanzania, on the other hand, there is an alternative — a new ideology of TANU and "African socialism." It has not displaced the old

coastal ideology, as is evidenced by the desire of people who have become important to take wives of high rank; the two ideologies exist side by side. But men have been able to move up in the hierarchy through their new status as government servants, TANU party officials, etc. In other words, this is a society in which Bailey's model does seem to fit the facts.

To return to the two concepts used throughout this paper — hierarchy and stratification, and the way in which they are related to one another — Dumont has claimed, as I have said earlier, that in a caste society, the hierarchy encompasses the stratification system. In other words, no amount of political or economic change will alter the hierarchy. But in noncaste societies, such as Mafia Island, the hierarchy is encompassed by the stratification system, and here we can obviously expect to see adjustments in rank following political or economic change.

It is not enough to say that a caste system is "peculiarly rigid," as Bailey has done; we must try to explain why this is so. I have put forward a few tentative points, and have tried to say wherein lies the rigidity of the caste system, namely the dichotomy between hierarchy and stratification, and the way in which the former "encompasses" the latter. It would seem that until a rival hierarchy with a new ideology is forthcoming, backed up by real political and economic power, there is unlikely to be radical change in Nepal.

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Himalayan Research: What, Whither, and Whether

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As I perused the preliminary list of some fifty-odd names (and even odder paper titles) listed as being "in one way or another" relevant to this session, I asked myself a question that must be in many of our minds: "Why are we here, in this symposium?" Perhaps it is inevitable that, in the context of our topic, I am reminded of George Mallory's oft-quoted reply fifty years ago to the question of why he wanted to climb Mt. Everest: "Because it is there." I think that we all are here because the Himalayas are there. And most of us would doubtless prefer to be there than here. I say this with some confidence because most of us here have been there and we share emotional as well as intellectual commitments there and in any case the Himalayas seem to be intrinsically appealing especially to those who have been there.

Here and there in the anthropological literature we find reference to the peoples of the Himalayas, and this has occurred with increasing frequency in recent years. Growing out of a much smaller and more informal albeit more aptly situated gathering — on a mountainside near Kyoto at the I.C.A.E.S. meetings in Japan in 1968 — we find ourselves now a bona fide "session," and in fact virtually a subdiscipline. At this juncture I think it worthwhile to spend a few moments looking at where we have come to and where we are going. I will limit myself to five points which I think deserve our attention.

1. Clearly we share a belief that the "Himalayan interface" represents an entity suitable for scholarly study — a functional entity — an interrelated whole. It encompasses diversity, of course, but most of us believe that it encompasses significant commonality as well. I would emphasize that this commonality should not simply be taken for granted. Its nature, extent, and relevance should be subjects for inquiry and debate (cf., Berreman 1960; Nitzberg 1972). It should be demonstrated rather than

simply asserted; otherwise we run the risk of being a Himalayan "fan club" rather than a scholarly community. Merely because the Himalayas have geological coherence does not mean that they have anthropological coherence. We can seek to demonstrate the latter by attending to such diverse factors as ecological adaptation (based on the common environment of the Himalayas), political factors (based on the history of the Himalayas as a political boundary region), cultural-religious-linguistic factors (based on the Himalayas as a "natural" boundary area and meeting-place for peoples, their ways of life, religions, and languages), social factors (based on the Himalayas as a channel for communication as well as a barrier to it, and its people as an interactional network), and social-action factors (based on the common problems affecting the peoples of the Himalayas growing out of the common features of their situation as suggested above).

The degree to which the Himalayan interface is a viable entity for study depends greatly upon the subject of inquiry. It is a region for some purposes, it is part of a region for other purposes, and it is several regions for still other purposes. It has no absolute relevance or coherence — only relevance and coherence relative to particular scientific or practical issues. Therefore I think it important that we define the entity to which we refer, that we explain and specify the extent to which we treat it as an entity, and especially that we specify the bases upon which we so treat it, the context within which we do so, and the purposes for which we do so. Only then can those who read our works assess the legitimacy of our claims to scholarly recognition as a group or a subdiscipline and, in fact, only then can they assess the legitimacy of our works.

A good many years ago, I attempted to specify some features of a Pahari culture area (Berreman 1960; cf. Berreman 1963), with reference to regional and social variation therein, and the processes (especially the crucial role of communication) that affect it. Whatever importance that effort had lay more heavily in the fact that I was specific and hence my assertions could be tested, than the degree to which I was right or wrong (though I think I was right). Part of that statement seems to bear quotation in this context:

> There can be no single correct way to define a culture area or cultural group. A broad definition might parallel that of the geneticists' definitions of race, e.g., "a population which differs significantly from other human populations in regard to the frequency of one or more of the genes it possesses" (Boyd, 1950:207). Thus, 'culture area' might refer to the area inhabited by people or social groups who share more culture content (including social structure) or more of particular elements of culture content with one another than with those outside the area, the amount and kind of common culture to be decided on the basis of the problem to be studied. A cultural group could be defined similarly without the areal criterion. Such a definition allows the flexibility to conceive of culture areas or groups at various levels of abstraction. It implies no judgement, for example, as to the

relative validity of designating Bhatbair, Garhwal, and North India as culture areas. Each is a relatively homogeneous culture area [relatively] isolated from comparable areas (Berreman 1960:789–790).

The Himalayan interface can be considered in this light.

2. Until quite recently, Himalayan research has been the preserve primarily of foreign scholars, by which I mean those who come from outside of those nations bordering on the Himalayas. Now, for the first time, we find significant participation by scholars from those nations. This is to be welcomed as evidence of a breach in the wall of "academic colonialism" (Saberwal 1968; Berreman 1969a), and as promising an increase in the quantity, intensity, and sensitivity of research carried out from within to a greater extent than heretofore (Srinivas 1966). This trend should be welcomed and encouraged by all of us. I hope that cooperative research and coordinated research projects will become more common, and will reflect increasingly the interests and insights of indigenous scholars. In this regard, I have been especially gratified to see the creation of the Northwestern Station of the Anthropological Survey of India, in Dehra Dun, devoted exclusively to research in the Indian Himalayas. Surely now we will see comprehensive coverage of the peoples and cultures of these regions with systematic attention to practical and theoretical issues (cf. Raha this volume), rather than the haphazard anthropological attention accorded the region heretofore. Surely, too, foreign scholars will find their work informed by the intensive work of Indian scholars and enhanced by collaboration with them to the benefit of all. This trend is already evidenced in the present session [1973], where South Asian scholars are very much in evidence — a distinct contrast with five years ago when, as I recall, there were no South Asians at the Himalayan meeting.

Lest I sound overly congratulatory on this matter, let me point out that while academic colonialism has been diminished in the sense of foreign scholars versus scholars of nations bordering the Himalayas, we still see few scholars who are themselves native to the Himalayas. Where are the Garhwali, the Gurung, the Lepcha anthropologists? The demise of academic colonialism in the Himalayas can come only with their arrival on the scene — and they will have to include both Dom and Khas, both low and high. A Bengali Brahman, for example, may be regarded by Garhwali Doms as almost as foreign, and may suffer almost as many disadvantages in research, as an Englishman.

3. Politics has always been a limiting factor in research in the Himalayas because it is a sensitive border region that is a focus of disputes among several nations. This problem should not be minimized. The high proportion of anthropologists with Himalayan interests who are currently working in Nepal rather than India reflects only partly the ethnic and

ecological diversity of Nepal and the anthropological interest these evoke, and only partly the romance of that beautiful and relatively unspoiled country. It reflects also the fact that foreigners are allowed to do research in the Nepal Himalayas whereas the opportunities to do so in the Indian Himalayas are extremely limited by national policy. At present, Americans, at least, are virtually prohibited from doing rural research in India at all, and even Indians find it difficult or impossible to gain permission to work in many Himalayan areas. To a significant extent we Americans have brought this situation upon ourselves or have had it brought upon us by our political leaders — by foolishness, arrogance, and insensitivity. Many of us remember only too well the "Himalayan Blunder," as one Indian editorial writer called it (*National Herald* 1968), of the Defense Department funded (and happily short-lived) Himalayan Border Countries Research Project which emanated from my own university and about which I have written elsewhere (Berreman 1969a). None can forget the United States' official position on events surrounding the birth of Bangladesh, nor the Indian response thereto. The consequences of these and other incidents like them have not been trivial for anthropological research in the Himalayas and elsewhere in India.

I will not here repeat the arguments regarding "academic colonialism," the demise of which I applaud and have attempted to hasten (cf. Berreman 1969a). If foreign scholars are to continue to work in the region they must be alert to these issues. They must be sensitive to the impact they are making on the people they study, on the indigenous scholars in their disciplines, and on the governments of the nations in which they work. They must be sensitive to the priorities these people and institutions place on work in their midst, and must be ready to work in conjunction and coordination with them, and with their approval. No longer does the foreign scholar have carte blanche in the Himalayas on the basis of money or prestige or anything else, and lest the scholarly baby be thrown out with the colonial bath, we foreigners will be well advised to recognize that fact and act accordingly. It is high time that we did so.

4. Politics, however, cuts both ways, and indigenous scholars can scarcely afford to be sanguine about its effects. The very fact that it is governments which decide who shall be permitted to do research and what research shall be allowed poses problems of another sort — those of government control and censorship. These problems affect not only foreigners seeking research access to the Himalayas; they also affect indigenous scholars. These problems are acute in India, where the Anthropological Survey of India, whose officers do most of the research in the Himalayas and in tribal areas, is a government agency, and where virtually all research funds are of government origin. This means that independent scholarship there is likely to be compromised no matter how good the intentions of the scholars involved. As we Americans have

found out only too vividly and to our sorrow, he who pays the piper has a distinct tendency to call the tune, even in social science (cf., Wolf and Jorgensen 1970). It is hard to criticize national policies when one is dependent upon the government for one's livelihood, especially when one works in a politically sensitive region or on politically sensitive problems. Censorship may not be overt, but subtle pressures are effective in curtailing potentially critical or embarrassing research. This should be an area of concern and watchfulness for all of us.

5. Research priorities are determined partly by scholars and partly by sources of funds (including especially government sources in the case of South Asia, as I have noted). To a significant extent the priorities held by scholars are channeled by the priorities attached to funds through awards of research grants, through employment opportunities, through availability of training facilities, etc. They are also channeled by permissions policies (visas, entry permits, restricted zones, prohibited zones, clearance requirements, etc.) affecting both indigenous and foreign scholars. Thus, apart from the relatively overt problems of research censorship are the covert problems of channeling research efforts into problems and places that are acceptable, uncontroversial, fashionable, and productive by the standards of those who give money, review proposals, employ anthropologists, and publish their works. This, too, is a problem of immediate importance and long-range impact in the Himalayas. It is a problem complicated by academic colonialism and scholarly empire-building as well as by political considerations.

I believe that the "politics of truth," described and extolled by C. Wright Mills, is a legitimate basis for most anthropological research. I commend his discussions of the subject to you, and here offer two brief quotations. "The very enterprise of social science, as it determines fact, takes on political meaning. In a world of widely communicated nonsense, any statement of fact is of political and moral significance. All social scientists, by the fact of their existence, are involved in the struggle between enlightenment and obscurantism. In a world such as ours, to practice social science is, first of all, to practice the politics of truth" (Mills 1961:178). The job of the social scientist, like any "man of knowledge," "is the maintenance of an adequate definition of reality. . . . The main tenet of his politics [the politics of truth] is to find out as much of the truth as he can and to tell it to the right people, at the right time, and in the right way" (Mills 1964:611). *That* is the social relevance of our work, and that is our social responsibility.

The Himalayas are shrouded in mists of myth, romance, and misconception, and their people, no longer isolated from the impact of their governments, entrepreneurs, and others, suffer as a result of these misconceptions. For better or for worse, the peoples of the Himalayas are included in programs of community development and education, they are

reached by motor roads, they are regulated in customs and behavior, they are taxed, they are beguiled by merchants, reviled by religious figures — in short, they are incorporated into the outside world from which their lofty environment, in simpler times, largely protected them. On the whole, the government servants, who are invested with protecting their interests, are benevolent in intent but are quite ignorant of their situation, of their hopes and fears, of their problems and opportunities. Whatever we learn from our research, therefore, honestly and publicly told, is more likely to help them than to harm them, as long as we carefully protect the anonymity of individuals. And we should act accordingly. We should report what we find, as we find it, as fully as we are able, in its full human context. If instances arise where research appears to be potentially harmful in its effects, it should not be done or its findings should remain unreported. These decisions are up to the individual researcher, based on his best assessment of the situation of his research. I think my point thus far is self-evident, morally requisite, and widely agreed upon in the profession (cf., American Anthropological Association 1970).

Beyond that, however, anthropologists have a positive responsibility to those they study, namely to attend to the problems and issues confronting them in their lives. The late Nirmal Kumar Bose, for many years India's Commissioner of Scheduled Castes and Tribes, exemplified the acceptance of this responsibility to a unique degree throughout his life as an anthropologist, and gave lasting honor to the profession in so doing. To emphasize the nature of this responsibility, I will repeat what I said at Simla in 1968, before the conference on Urgent Research in Social Anthropology (of which, incidentally, Dr. Bose was Chairman): When I ask myself, "what are the urgent problems in Indian social anthropology," I immediately think of the urgent problems facing this nation and its people, and of our claim to be students of "the science of man." Surely the most urgent problems for anthropologists are those most urgent to all people: poverty, ill health, hunger, hopelessness, bigotry, oppression and war. Whatever we can say that is relevant to these vital problems is urgent (Berreman 1969b:1). This is equally true for the Himalayan region.

It is scarcely evident from our writings, I fear, that the fascinating peoples of the beautiful Himalayas are afflicted with appalling poverty, ill-health, high infant mortality, short life expectancy; that those of low caste are subject to severe oppression with little or no recourse to the nations' protective legislation; that few of the amenities offered other rural peoples of the subcontinent are available in the Himalayas, most noticeably modern medicine and schooling and including in many places such mundane but valued perquisites as adequate and readily accessible water supplies. As one who has remained in touch with the people of one Pahari village for over fifteen years, I can testify that these are agonizing

problems to those who experience them (cf., Berreman 1972). I hope that as our Himalayan research increases, we will report and analyze these and other problems facing those we study, and that we will propose solutions where possible, whether or not these reports, analyses, and proposals are recognized by governments, by sources of funds, or by colleagues as legitimate or worthy scholarly activities. We have a responsibility to do so; otherwise we become chroniclers of an idyllic view of Himalayan life which bears little relationship to the reality of those who live it, or we become celebrants of a status quo so selectively reported as to be grossly misleading to those in a position to alter it. Either is a disservice to the people whose confidence and goodwill we seek and rely upon for the success of our research and the success of our own careers.

The remote Himalayas are no longer so remote, their peoples no longer so isolated as they once were. Change is upon them. We may regret this, incurable romantics that most of us are, but we cannot stop it. At best we can perhaps have an impact on the nature and direction of that change. We can perhaps soften the blow of change, help direct it into positive channels, and thereby contribute to the enhancement of the lives of the people we study. We know them and their situations better than do most of those who make policy regarding them, and we are often in a position to convey their experiences and wishes to policy-makers and to the public to whom those policy-makers are responsible. Our politics is the truth of their lives. In choosing our research projects and in reporting our research results, we should bear this in mind. In so doing we can perhaps become benefactors rather than passive or romantic reporters. By benefactors I do not mean paternalistic ones, but responsive, cooperative, sensitive, empathetic, and informed spokesmen and analysts for the people and the situations we study. This may be more difficult rather than less for those working within their own nations and in the service of their own governments than it is for us foreigners, but it is no less incumbent upon them to seek out the truth and make it public, and to explain its significance, its consequences, and its implications to those in power. As scientists and as human beings we cannot in good conscience do less, for those we study are affected by what we *do not do* as well as by what we *do* — by inaction as much as by action.

The people of the Himalayas have given us much that is of scholarly interest, they have given us the community of interest upon which this session is based, they have given us our scholarly identity and our very livelihoods. We owe them whatever we can give that is of practical and human importance to them. If we do not accept that moral obligation — if we do not pursue the politics of truth as far as we possibly can — then we would be better advised not to impose upon the Himalayan peoples and not to intrude into their lives, for our efforts will have been humanly irrelevant with the result that their trust and our science will have been

betrayed. In that event, to paraphrase Danton's remark written shortly before his execution: it were better we become poor fishermen (or in our case, perhaps, poor mountaineers) than to meddle with the lives of men.

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SECTION TWO

The South Asian Perspective

Actual and Ideal Himalayas: Hindu Views of the Mountains

AGEHANANDA BHARATI

During the credits preceding the Hindi *jhanak jhanak pāyal bāje* — a film, resembling *The Sound of Music* in more than one bad way, which is shown in India and wherever there are Indians outside the country since 1960 — a chorus chanted the first verse of Kālīdāsa's *Meghadūta,* extolling the Himalayas, abode of Śiva and his spouse. Sanskrit is hardly the medium intelligible to the audience that saw the movie, one of the greatest box office hits ever. In the whole movie, which lasts three and one-half hours (and is rather short in comparison with the older batch of Hindi movies), there was one purely thespian scene, a dance competition in which two dancers interpret an episode from Shaivite mythology. At the back of the stage, a highly stylized peak was visible. It was meant to be, I presume, Mount Kailāsa, the abode of the Hindu and Buddhist divinities; but actually it resembled one of the more elaborate whipped-cream sundaes. I think that this production sets the scene for what follows, though in a slightly facetious way. For a good sample of any Hindu population, we could simply count movie audiences throughout the subcontinent. These are not usually *engagé* Hindus — everyone seems to like mythological and secular movies.

To the very large Indian population the Himalayas are mythical mountains, but in a far more involved way than Mount Sinai, for instance, might be to Orthodox Jews living in the Western world or even in Israel. For, apart from the Himalayan Hindus whom Professor Berreman has been studying and writing about, and apart from people from the plains who have actually made a pilgrimage to one or more of the Hindu shrines in the Himalayas, Hindus do not have any geographical or geophysical conception of the range. Suppose you ask ten randomly selected village or even urban people who do not remember any geography from their schooldays, where they think Mt. Everest is located. They would not be

able to answer, or they might say, perhaps, that it is somewhere in Kashmir, since this is the location most widely known. Even average schooling, which stops short of college training, does not seem to prevent the crowding-out of geographical or factual knowledge by mythical notions about the Himalayas. And, quite amazingly, neither does an actual visit or a pilgrimage to a Himalayan center. Even after visiting such a center once, most people would still tend to talk about the Himalayas as though they were a single entity, a homogeneous whole; much as the *pahāṛis,* i.e., the Indian-Hindu populations along the Himalayan range, including the Indian and Nepalese *terāi,* refer to the enormously larger rest of India as *maidān,* "the plains."

I think that the closest parallel of this duality in a Western setting may be found in the actual and the mythical Jerusalem. There is, no doubt, some occasional overlap between the two, as, for instance, when a Western traveler, not necessarily a devout Jew or Christian, stands above the Gethsemane Garden overlooking Jerusalem: he may then be acutely aware both of the mythical background and of the soil on which he stands, dry and pleasant, but overcrowded by Diners Club tourists. This situation would be analogous to that of a Hindu's casual visit to some shrine in the course of a summer vacation in the mountains. But even more appropriate, I think, would be a parallel with the duality between the Jerusalem of a Bach cantata and its audience, and the actual Jerusalem — two very different and objectively unrelated configurations.

The late Swami Sivananda, known to millions of Americans and Europeans who seek wisdom through the East, called his affluent institution the "Yoga Vedanta Forest Academy," and the blurbs of its numerous pamphlets and publications stressed its Himalayan location. The neophyte who chances to get there, however, is invariably disappointed, for there is no sign of tall mountains anywhere within forty miles from the *ashram.* This "Himalayan" spiritual center, together with many hundreds of larger and smaller monastic institutions at Hardvar and Hrishikesh, is no nearer to any mountains than is eastern Montana, despite its name. When I discussed this matter with Swami Sivananda's successor and suggested that "Himalaya is a state of mind," he nodded eagerly, obviously not realizing that my remarks had been facetious.

Anthropologists at every level know the importance of ascriptive or fictitious elements. So when I say that to all Hindus, except those who live there, the Himalayas tend to be ascriptive rather than actual mountains, *this* is not a facetious statement. Professor T. V. R. Murti, a famous Hindu philosopher who wrote a classic on Mahayana Buddhism, once said: "Existentialism says that potentiality is more important than actuality. This is true: the Himalayas of the rishis and the yogis, is more important as an ideal to us than are the actual rocks and the miserable huts of the people there." I think this sums it up. Murti is as knowledgeable as he is

dogmatic; he is also an ideal type of Brahmin, the sort that Dumont might have hoped for when he wrote his *Homo hierarchicus*. It is not the "miserable huts" which Murti disdains, since huts are equally miserable in many parts of Tamilnad. It is the way in which mountain people live, eating all sorts of horrible things, not bathing every day; and the way in which they are infected by all sorts of northern Buddhist heresy, even if they are Hindus. I think this is the reason why Hindu scholars who study Buddhism refuse to learn Tibetan, though they know that only a very small fraction of the Mahayana texts is preserved in Sanskrit, and that most of it is available only in Tibetan translations.

One of Professor Guenther's associates at the Government Sanskrit College at Benares, a Brahmin under Guenther's influence, did indeed begin to learn Tibetan; all the other pandits made fun of him, and since his name was Jagannath, he was given the nickname "Jaggai Lama," which has stayed with him, probably until this day. There is here a subtler addendum: not only are Tibetans and other mountain folk unwashed and unorthodox, but their northern Buddhism took its inspiration from a form of Sanskrit which was, so the pandits think, *bad* Sanskrit. It was not a different idiom, the one described in great detail by the late Professor Edgerton and called Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit. There is the pervasive feeling among the learned in the Hindu tradition, that ideologically important concepts cannot be expressed except in elegant or at least standard grammatical Sanskrit. Meat eating, irregular bathing, unpredictable sex habits, and bad or no Sanskrit in religious matters form a quartet in the Brahmin's mind, a syndrome to which I referred elsewhere as "noxious fusion" — this is similar to the "fusion" the average, nonacademic American makes of long hair, drugs, sexual perversion, and communism.

There is no such negative reciprocity on the side of the Tibetan scholar. Though Nehru's India and perhaps the India surrounding Dharamshala are not the object of the Tibetan refugee scholar monk's supreme love, he does not entertain toward the Indian tradition and its agents any feelings comparable to those adumbrated above. India as *phags yul* (Āryavarta), the Noble Land, is ascriptive and hence untouched by the surrounding image of the present host country. The language of India is *phags skad* (Āryabhāṣā), a generic term I think, covering Pali, Sanskrit and the idiom called Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit by Edgerton. The script of all India is thought to be the Devanāgari script. About a dozen years ago, the senior lama of the Saskya sect asked me to teach him the holy script; I thought he wanted to be able to read Buddhist Sanskrit, perhaps, but what he actually did was to learn to transliterate Tibetan words (*mantras*) and other religious writings into the Devanāgari script. The fact that it is this script that the Tibetan reveres, rather than any other Indian script, seems to have to do with the relatively greater familiarity of Tibetans with North

Indian and perhaps Nepalese writing. Professor Hurvitz of the University of British Columbia informed me that some old lamas had seen the Russian edition of the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka* in the early 1920's, and that edition was in Devanāgari script.

Also, the Tibetans do not accept the purity-pollution scheme so pervasively present in India. Robert B. Ekvall reported that the Tibetan monks who eat meat, one and all, feel guilty about it, because they know that they really should not. And he thinks that this feeling has been internalized over a long period of time, because, as there never was much else to eat in Tibet, a vegetarian diet in the Indian sense was out of the question. The norms of ritualistic purity, and the ideal balance of normal ritualistic status, so well discussed by anthropologists working in the Indian field, are absent among the Tibetans, even as an ideal. My lama friends simply did not think that taking a bath or changing one's clothes before worship was in any way required. In India, it is essential.

Hindu border populations — including groups that are ethnically Tibetan but identify themselves as Hindus like a section of the Bhutia in the Almora District of Uttar Pradesh — are aware of the need for bathing and for a vegetarian diet. It is conceivable that they feel toward these practices much as low caste, plains Hindus do. In the village Lohaghat, where I spent two years, both Brahmins and Khasa-kṣattriyas eat meat — which means, they eat it when they can get it, sometimes only once a month. Meat-eating status and vegetarian status in Hindu India is like virginity, you either have it or you don't, and the quantity or frequency of the indulgence has no part in the definition. One Khasa man became a vegetarian under the influence of the nearby Ramakrishna Mission Ashram. This is strange, since the majority of the Ramakrishna monks, being Bengalis, are meat and fish eaters. All Hindus I spoke to at Lohaghat praised the man, extolling the virtues of vegetarianism. I would assume, then, that the process of Sanskritization extends to all Himalayan groups today, except the ethnically *and* culturally Tibetan groups like the Sherpas.

Equally fascinating, Tibetans view Indian sanctuaries as though they were extraterritorial. They do not like the actual India: even before things went awry in Tibet, necessitating mass emigration to India, they thought that the actual Indian land was too hot, the people were unfriendly, the trading was tough. "Indian traders are unfriendly, they never laugh, not even when they make money," a Tibetan muleteer told me. "Also, they call everyone [meaning every Tibetan] a 'lama'." The man felt, I believe, that Indians, rather than showing special respect toward Tibetans, show disrespect toward the lama, much as the marine sergeant who calls every American Indian "chief."

Professor Tucci once wrote his impressions of Darjeeling and Kalimpong. The two resident populations in those lovely towns are Tibetan and

Bengali (in season the total local population is exceeded by tourists). The two populations gaze at each other with a sort of fascinated amazement mixed with dislike and some fear. There is absolutely no communication between the two, each regarding the other as some sort of strange animal. Tucci may have exaggerated, but there still is some truth in what he says. In one Bengali and two famous Hindi movies whose locale was that area, there were quite a few Tibetan women in the supporting cast, either as domestic servants, in which case they were fat and funny and spoke Hindi with a nonexisting accent, or as performers of native dances, adding color to the scheme. With the great post-Independence love of tableaus and of regional music and dance, this was of course highly welcome. Still, there does not seem to be any attempt at communication at any level of human intercourse. The occasional Tibetan in Delhi, selling Tibetan artifacts in front of the Imperial Hotel, and the Tibetan ecclesiastic visiting the Indian capital do not feel at ease, nor do people talk to them. They seem more foreign to the Delhiwala than Western visitors. It would be interesting to talk to the Tibetan scholars who by now have been working many years in Delhi, in Dr. Lokesh Chandra's institute. These are the only Tibetan scholars who have been exposed to an urban, sophisticated, Indian atmosphere for any length of time.

What I call the *rishi* syndrome — the Hindu attraction to the ascriptive Himalayas — is not reciprocated by the Tibetans in an analogous manner. On both sides of the mountain there is, of course, an impressive official and unofficial body of legends about Mount Kailāsa and Lake Manasarowar. But since the Tibetans live there, the actual-ascriptive dichotomy is much less radical among them than among the Hindu populations not dwelling on the mountains. Pilgrimage to these mountains is quite frequent, or at least it was before the Chinese take-over. Before 1960, Hindu pilgrims of the hardier and more highly motivated kind did visit and circumambulate Mount Kailāsa and Lake Manasarowar: it was a rather uncomfortable journey on foot of at least three weeks after leaving the last Indian settlement. Swami Prabhavananda's book on his pilgrimage to Mount Kailāsa has been translated into many Indian languages and was frequently read in monastic and paramonastic circles.

To the Tibetans, many places in India are potential centers of pilgrimage. The highly learned Saskya lama, who has been in Seattle for the past fifteen years, gave me a long list of places of pilgrimage, which I cross-checked with Buston's and Tārānātha's *Histories*. Over two-thirds of the places mentioned in the texts and by the lama are nonexistent, or they are obscure places, allegedly connected with Buddhist hagiography, or their names are so garbled as to be unintelligible. It is a fact, though, that at least until two decades ago, Tibetan ecclesiastics were more likely to have heard about Nalanda and Vikramashila, two places known only to

the Buddhist scholars in India, than about Calcutta and Bombay. This, of course, has changed drastically. Bombay and Calcutta are not mentioned anywhere in the Tibetan texts, since those regions were outside the pale of Buddhist expansion at the time when the Tibetan texts were composed.

To me, the most fascinating fact related to our theme, is the dual body of legends — totally different and unrelated — connected with the very same sacred places, both in India and Tibet. Mount Kailāsa, of course, is the largest example — to the Hindus, it is the abode of Lord Śiva and his spouse, to the Tibetans it is the location where Padmasambhava defeated the Bon priests and the supernatural powers hostile to Buddhism, making them servants of the *dharma.* The Gaya complex is physically divided — the Gaya that is the center of all Hindu obsequial rituals of the Great Tradition is officially called "Brahma Gaya," but I have never heard anyone use this term. English-speaking Hindus who know about Buddha Gaya, call it "the real Gaya"; Buddhist pilgrims from all over Asia visit the Mahabodhi Temple, and pay homage to the original Bodhi Tree there. Hindu pilgrims, unless they are urban and sophisticated, do not even visit the location.

But there is another location where both systems impose their legends on the very same site, unbeknown to each other. Amritsar is known to everyone, including the American Express, as a sight to be seen, being the central shrine of Sikhism. The "Golden Temple" (Baṛā Darbār Saheb) is an elegant edifice, and it is surrounded by a quadrangular "lake," actually a reservoir, built over a natural pond. The name of the city means "lake of nectar," a reference to this expanse of water. I always wondered why there were so many Tibetan pilgrims at the place, looking quite incongruous and radically unrelated to the Sikhs, who own, run, and worship at the shrine. (That was before the Chinese take-over of Tibet, and long before the Dharmashala and Dalhousie centers were established for the Tibetan refugees.) So I asked the *mahant* [the head priest of the temple] why Tibetans were visiting in great numbers. He said "They too come here from afar to worship Guru Nānak [the founder of Sikhism], just as Guruji had visited many lands including Tibet." This is, of course, Sikh mythology; Nānak probably visited Ladakh, but not Tibet proper. Years later, I found that the *mahant*'s explanation was not the reason at all. To the Tibetans, this lake is the place right out of which the great Padmasambhava, the divine baby, was born (hence his name "Lotus born"). The founder of Tibetan Buddhism, according to the several traditions, was indeed born in the Indian Northwest, and according to Tucci, as far west as the Swat Valley. But we have here the superimposition of two mythologies on the same site — and maybe their mutual lack of recognition, foisted on some sort of actual symbiosis, represents a typical theme of the Indo-Tibetan interface in the circum-Himalayan region.

Stratification and Religion in a Himalayan Society

MANIS KUMAR RAHA

The Great Himalayan Ranges, which once gave shelter to various ethnic groups like the Apsaras, the Dasas, the Yaksas, the Raksasa, the Gandharvas, the Kinnaurs, the Khasas, and many other divine races of ancient times, are, even to this day, the habitat of numerous ethnic groups. Throughout the stretch of the range from Jammu and Kashmir to Arunachal (NEFA), we meet people of varied cultures and activities. There are nomadic herders who move with their livestock from one area to another throughout the year, while others are settled in villages. Some farmers practice terraced cultivation with improved modern methods, while others still follow the crude method of shifting cultivation. Some groups extol polyandry, while others favor monogamy. In certain areas, Buddhism (Lamaism) is the religion of a good number of the people. For others, Hinduism reigns supreme, while yet others prefer Christianity or live in a world of their own deities and spirits.

The Kinnaurese, Kinner, or Kinnaura are such a group of people living in the lap of the Great Himalayan Ranges. They live in the District of Kinnaur in the State of Himachal Pradesh. These people, who live at altitudes varying from 6,000 to 14,000 ft. above sea level, have their own cultural pattern — one quite distinct from that of the plains areas and even somewhat different from that of the other areas of the western Himalayas. Living in the high altitude of the western Himalayas they have adapted themselves to the peculiar ecological conditions prevalent there,

This article is an outcome of a survey undertaken in the District of Kinnaur, Himachal Pradesh from April 1970 to October 1972 under the auspices of the Anthropological Survey of India, Government of India. The author expresses his deep sense of gratitude to Dr. S. C. Sinha, Director, Anthropological Survey of India, for his critical comments and valuable suggestions. The author also acknowledges his debt to Shri S. N. Mahato, and Shri Ramesh Chandra, of the Anthropological Survey of India, for their assistance in collecting data.

and have shaped their culture by fearlessly facing the extreme difficulties of the jagged and uninviting Himalayan terrain. They have been living there for centuries, sucking the nectar of life from the desolate rocks of the fierce Himalayas for survival.

This article is an attempt to focus on the structural stratification and religious duality in Kinnaur culture. I have divided the District into three culture zones: Zone I includes almost the whole of Pooh subdivision and is dominated by Buddhism (Lamaism). Zone II covers Nachar subdivision and is dominated by the local Hinduism. Zone III is sandwiched between the above two zones and includes Kalpa subdivision and part of Pooh subdivision. This last zone has a mixture of both Buddhism (Lamaism) and local Hinduism.

THE PLACE

Kinnaur is the northeastern frontier District of Himachal Pradesh bordering Tibet. This rugged mountainous District was created on May 1, 1960. Earlier it had been part of the erstwhile Bushahr State. Just before the formation of the District it was a Tehsil of Mahasu District (at present Simla District). The District at present is divided into three subdivisions, namely Pooh, Kalpa, and Nachar. In these three subdivisions there are five Tehsils, one sub-Tehsil, and seventy-seven villages. Earlier the administrative set-up was different. *Punjab States Gazetteer* states that Kinnaur was a Tehsil of Bushahr State and was divided into a number of *parganas,* each of which was again divided into a number of *ghoris,* which consisted in turn of a number of villages (Government of Punjab 1911: 65).

The District is divisible into wet and dry zones. The monsoon reaches only lower Kinnaur, consisting of the lower reaches of Sutlej Valley and the Baspa Valley, the area south of the Great Himalaya. The area beyond Kalpa is arid and almost devoid of vegetation, as the Great Himalaya obstructs any further movement of the monsoon clouds.

THE PEOPLE

The inhabitants of Kinnaur District are known as Kinner, Kinnaura, or Kinnaurese. These people are mentioned in many a Hindu mythology, where they have been considered as belonging to a divine race. In a Sanskrit classic, *Amarkosh,* they have been placed among godly races like the Apsaras, Yaksas, Gandharvas, Guhyakas, Siddhas, and others. In some other ancient Indian literature they have been described as fabulous beings: half human, half bird with bird's legs and wings and human head,

or with human body with a horse's head, or a horse's body with a human head (Alain 1964:307). They have also been described as *Kimpurusa* meaning "a kind (*kim*) of human being (*purusa*)." Actually this name was given to the enslaved and the defeated Dasas (Zimmer 1947:120). In the *Mahabharata* (*Adiparba*) and *Kumarsambhabam* (Chap. 1) the Kinnaurese have been mentioned as musicians and court singers, living in the high Himalayas. They have also been mentioned in the *Ramayana* (*Uttar Khand*), *Raghubansam* (Chap. 4), *Manusamhita* (Chap. 10), and *Vachaspatyam.* In *Raghubansam,* the Kinnaurese were considered a polyandrous tribe in the Himalayan region and in Nepal.

At present Kinnaurese means the inhabitants of this district. There are five different ethnic groups: the Khosia (or Rajputs, also known as the Kanet), the Lohar, the Badhi or the Ores, the Koli, and the Nangalu. The Khosia (Rajput) who live in the Pooh subdivision are also sometimes known as the Zad. The Khosia are landowners and agriculturists. The Lohar are blacksmiths and make iron implements and also ornaments for other Kinnaurese. The Badhi (Ores) are the carpenters; they also work as masons and build houses. The Koli are weavers, leather workers, and agriculturists. The Nangalu are mainly basket makers.

At present the Kinnaurese, in general, have been declared a Scheduled Tribe and four of the five groups (Lohar, Badhi, Koli, and Nangalu) are Scheduled Castes.

According to the 1971 census the total population of Kinnaur District is 49,835 of which 26,407 are males and 23,428 females. Table 1 shows the population of this District and of its three subdivisions.

Table 1.

District/subdivision	Total population	Scheduled Tribe population	Scheduled Caste population
Kinnaur District	49,835	34,090	9,669
Nachar subdivision	14,205	8,922	4,170
Kalpa subdivision	19,217	12,168	4,123
Pooh subdivision	16,413	13,000	1,376

Table 1 reveals that the total population of Kinnaur District has increased 21.61 percent since 1961 (the 1961 census returned a total of 40,980 souls in Kinnaur District). The 1971 population was only 1.44 percent of the total population of the state of Himachal Pradesh (3,424,332). Further, the Scheduled Tribes form the bulk of the population (68.41 percent) of the district. The Scheduled Caste population also is large (19.40 percent). This means that most of the population of this district consists of the Scheduled Tribes and the Scheduled Castes.

All the census enumerations from 1901 to 1971 recorded a slightly lower number of females per thousand males, except the 1951 census,

which returned 1,070 females per 1,000 males. In 1961 there were 969 females per 1,000 males, and in 1971 only 893 per 1,000 males.

ECONOMY

Not much information is available on their economic activities and conditions in bygone times. Nevertheless, there is little doubt that agriculture and trade, along with sheep rearing, have been sources of their livelihood for a long time. Frazer (1820:263) states that the inhabitants of this district, in exchange for the products of their country (wool, woolen cloth, dried grapes, *chilgoza*, and various other things), used to bring cereals of various kinds. Salt which was brought from "Bootan" or Tibet was also sold to the plains areas or lower hills. Besides sheep and cattle, in some areas *saorajee* or yak were reared in good numbers. Ponies together with asses and mules were likewise bred and kept (Frazer 1820:264). Gerard found them as traders who considered sheep and goats as their wealth. They used to come down to Rampur, Simla, Hardwar, and many other places during the winter to market their commodities. During summer they used to go to Leh and Tibet for trade. Only a few people used to stay in the villages in the winter (Gerard 1841:80). Wool was an important product. "The chief and almost only manufacture" of this area was "the fabrication of woolen cloths of several sorts" (Frazer 1820:273).

As stated, trade played a vital role in their economic life until the late 1950's or even early 1960's.

> The Kunawar merchants carry on a trade not only with the plains and the neighbouring Chinese provinces, but . . . they are also the chief carriers between Garha, Ludhak and Cashmere and even push their commercial enterprises as far as Lhasa on the south-east, exchanging commodities between that place and Nepal and the latter and the Chinese towns in little Tibet and to the northward trading between Cashmere, Yurkand, Kashgar, Garha, and the various cities and people of these quarters (Frazer 1820:264, 274).

From Rampur (at present in Simla District), which is still famous for the *lavi* trade fair, and other places of the lower hills they used to buy rice, wheat, sugar, molasses, cotton clothing, *kiriana* (drugs, groceries etc.), metallic utensils, and implements to sell partly in their own country and mostly in different trade centers. In exchange, they used to bring wool, *pasmina*, borax, rock salt, brick-tea, ponies, *tiu* (Tibetan horses), yak-tails, and other items, which they used to sell partly in their villages and mostly in Rampur and other neighboring states (Davies 1862:cci).

The traditional occupations of different ethnic groups of Kinnaur were different. While the Khosia (Kanet) were agriculturists, sheep rearers, and traders, the Lohar were iron workers. The Badhi had carpentry and

masonry as their traditional occupations. Basket making was the old profession for the Nangalu, and the Koli had weaving and leather working to themselves.

At present agriculture plays a vital role in the Kinnaur economy. The two main ethnic groups in this district, the Khosia and the Koli, are mostly agriculturists. Cultivation is done on the slopes or terraces of the mountains. "The spaces of arable land are few, and the cultivation is commonly done in narrow strips along the brows of the mountains" (Gerard 1841:63–64). The land here is graded on the basis of its altitude. Of the three different types of land *kimsaring* (7,000–11,000 ft. above sea level) and *neoglang* (5,000–7,000 ft. above sea level) yield two crops a year, while high altitude land *kanda* or *rongo* (11,000–14,000 ft. above sea level) produces only one crop. Wheat, barley, maize, *phapra*, and *olga* (*Fagopyrum poligonus*) are the main cereals. But very recently cash crops like potato, cabbage, cauliflower, pea, tomato, onion, ginger, garlic, and other vegetables have been introduced in Kinnaur. Due to government patronage, the Kinnaurese have diverted their attention toward these.

Another activity which is increasingly drawing public attention is fruit production. Though the Kinnaurese had been growing fruit for a long time, only recently, after the government had introduced improved varieties of fruits, have they been showing more and more interest in this source of income. Big farmers are now planting improved varieties of fruit trees with government help and patronage, in the hope of earning more cash. The government has drawn up extensive horticultural development programs for dry as well as fresh fruit.

Trade with Tibet, which once played an important role in the economic life of the Kinnaurese, has ceased since the early 1960's. After this closure their economy suffered a temporary setback, but the reverses have gradually been compensated for by alternative pursuits such as domestic business, horticulture, employment as laborers in different construction and development works, and employment in government and private businesses.

Even nowadays many Kinnaurese keep a large number of sheep and goats, which provide them with wool and meat and also act as beasts of burden. The considerable increase of the number of livestock from 95,529 in 1956 to 112,664 in 1966 and 122,961 in 1972 (excluding buffalo and goats, whose numbers declined) can be considered a healthy sign in the Kinnauri economy.

Furthermore, as the government has implemented various construction and development programs in the area, the Kinnaurese are getting good opportunities to earn cash by rendering manual labor and service. While a large number are being employed as laborers, many Kinnaurese, particularly the educated ones, are taking jobs in various government departments, private organizations, schools, and colleges.

So, changes in the occupational pattern of the Kinnaurese have taken place. With the cessation of trade across the border, the Khosia have turned toward various other occupations such as service, labor, fruit production, etc. Many Koli, who were originally weavers and leather workers, have given up the latter profession and instead have taken to cultivation and labor. The other castes, of course, along with their traditional occupations, have agriculture and labor to supplement their economy.

In a polyandrous Kinnauri household the division of labor is clearly demarcated. One of the brothers, usually the eldest, lives in the house throughout the year and maintains the household. The other brothers are given specific jobs to do. One of them is allotted the cultivation of high altitude land (*kanda*), where he goes in the month of May and stays in a temporary hut till October. He returns to the natal unit with the onset of winter. One or more brothers look after the livestock. They migrate to the lower hills, even to the plains, with their sheep and goats in search of pastures for grazing during October-November. They come back to their house in April-May when the winter is over.

SOCIAL STRATIFICATION

Broadly speaking, the Kinnaur District can be divided into two parts on the basis of the structure of the Kinnauri society. While we find simpler social stratification in Zone I, in Zones II and III a more complicated structure can be traced.

Taking Kinnaur as a whole, the Kinnaurese are divided into two broad categories: the Khosia (also known as the Rajput or Kanet) and the Beru. All over Kinnaur the Beru are subdivided into three major ethnostatus subdivisions. They are (1) the *damang* which includes the Lohar and the Badhi (or Ores), (2) the *chamang* which includes the Koli, and (3) the *chanalas* which includes the Nangalu. Of these four ethnic groups, the Koli are the most numerous everywhere. The Lohar and the Badhi are not found in every village, and where they are found, there are only one or a few households per village. The Nangalu are found mostly in lower Kinnaur.

With the exception of the Khosia, none of these ethnic groups in Kinnaur are divided into social divisions like clans or lineages. They are simply divided into a number of households. Only recently has some rudimentary form of occupational division been started among the Koli of lower Kinnaur (Zones II and III), for example, *bonu* and *sui*. Those who weave as their main occupation are called *bonu* [weaving], or those who have switched over to tailoring are called *sui* [stitching].

But so far as Khosia social stratification is concerned, it may be said

that two distinct systems, as stated earlier, are found in Kinnaur. The system in the greatest part of the Pooh area is quite different from that of the Kalpa and Nachar areas. In Kalpa, Nachar, and some parts of Pooh subdivision the Khosia are divided into three status groups (*khel*): namely the Orang, the Maorang or the Orang-Mech, and the Waza. Each of these status groups is further divided into a number of lineages (*khandan*). Again each lineage consists of a number of households (*kim*).

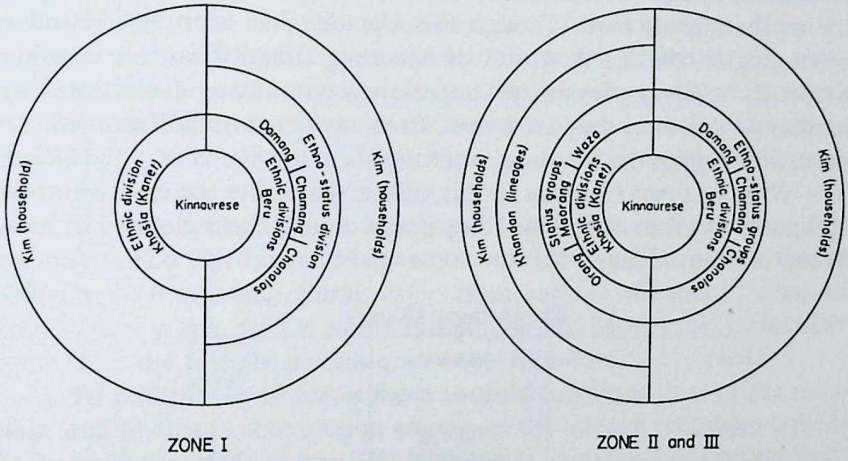

Figure 1. Stratification in the Kinnaurese society

On the other hand the Khosia of the greater part of the Pooh area (Zone I) are conspicuous by the absence of status groups and lineages. The household is the only social unit in this community.

STATUS GROUPS

Among the Khosia of Zone II and Zone III, three groups — the Orang, the Maorang or the Orang-Mech, and the Waza — have different hierarchical positions, the highest status belonging to the Orang group. Below the Orang group is the Maorang or the Orang-Mech (*mech* means "lower") group. The Waza, an occupational group which makes earthen pots has the lowest status. In olden days all these three status groups were strictly endogamous. Marriage with lower status groups was considered socially disgraceful. But gradually this rule regarding the higher two status groups relaxed and at present marriages have taken place between the two groups. If an Orang household establishes a marital union with a Maorang household, the Orang household is degraded to the status of the Maorang. But if a Maorang household can bring in a mate from the Orang *Khel* three times in the same generation or for three consecutive generations, then the Maorang household is upgraded, and it comes into the fold

of the Orang. But neither the Orang nor the Maorang can marry into the Waza. An illustration of this status group system from a village in Kalpa subdivision is given in Figure 2.

In this village the Khosia group has all three status groups — the Orang, the Maorang, and the Waza. Each of these has a number of *khandan*. The Orang group has five *khandans* — Khasto, Kusan, Rangseru, Kochapang and Rekong. The Maorang status group has four *khandan* — Zadpang, Krangelu, Charas, and Motan. Of these the Motan *khandan* has carpentry as their profession. Though this *khandan* has been considered as belonging to the status group of Maorang (the Kinnaurese consider carpentry a low profession yet superior to pot making, basket making, leather works, etc.) they are barred from any marriage alliance with any other *khandan* of the Maorang, not to speak of the *khandan* of the Orang. The Waza has two *khandan* in this village. These are the Nektu and the Rekpang. On the other hand, they marry among themselves or with the Waza of other villages.

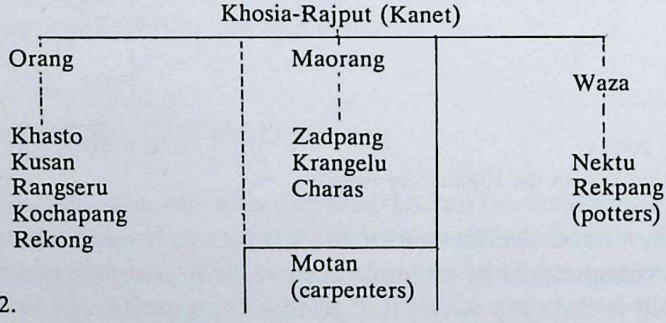

Figure 2.

I have pointed out earlier that the Orang and the Maorang are not strictly endogamous groups. A few marriages have been found in this village between the members of these two status groups. An interesting case can be cited here. There the only household of Zadpang lineage in this village came from some other village and settled here. Five years later, a man of this household married the daughter of a Khasto. Recently (1971) his son eloped with the daughter of a Rekong. So for two successive generations the Zadpang, a Maorang lineage, has married into Orang lineages. The villagers are of the opinion that if any more marriages take place between this Zadpang household and a household belonging to any lineage of the Orang, this Zadpang household will attain a higher status and thus be elevated to the Orang.

KHANDAN SYSTEM

As I pointed out earlier, the status groups of the Khosia are divided into a

number of exogamous lineages, known as *khandan.* This system denotes "a person's identity, his family of origin and his social position" (Sen 1970:109). These are characterized by location in particular geographical areas. The *khandan* of a village are different from those of the other villages in most cases; however, sometimes some *khandan* are common to adjoining villages. The general belief among these people is that members belonging to the same lineage have a common ancestry; that is, they are descended from a common ancestor, and as such, are prohibited from marrying within the same lineage. The name of the individual *khandan* has been derived from the place where its ancestor settled, or the place from which its ancestor migrated, or from the profession which its ancestor adopted. For illustration I cite the example of the *khandan* Thongpon or Thongpor. The ancestor of this *khandan* came from Poari (*Poar* → *Por/Pon*), a place in lower Kinnaur.

The *khandan* Chetha and Mangtoan have been derived from two persons named Chethu and Magu who came from outside and settled in Kinnaur. The *khandan* Surag came from *surakh*, meaning "wine of grapes (*su* = grape, *rakh* = wine). Pirumathas and Monegrokch *khandan* came from the priestly professions of the ancestors.

At the present the *khandan* has a twofold function: to regulate marriage and to ensure cooperation among all the lineage members collectively in all the crises of life. The *khandan* is an exogamous social unit, that regulates marriage by not allowing its members to marry among themselves, as the members of the same *khandan* are believed to be closely related. And because they are closely related, they are always obligated to assist and cooperate with their co-*khandan* members when required.

Some sort of hierarchy based on status is seen among different *khandan* of a village. In a village in Kalpa subdivision, the villagers consider lineages like Surag, Surein, Sangchain, Turkian, or Kochapang to be superior to some others, such as Dankas, Braise, Potian, or Aires. The superior lineages of this village, as in other villages, hold a high position in economic, social, and religious matters. Most of the households belonging to these lineages have larger landholdings, and their members hold key positions among the temple functionaries and play important roles in the village administration.

THE *KIM*

The *kim* (household) is the smallest social unit among the Kinnaurese. The household is patrilineal and residence is patrilocal with patripotestal authority. A typical Kinnauri household is a polyandrous unit having brothers living with their common wife and children. Due to the

increasing number of monogamous marriages, the frequency of the nuclear household is on the increase. The gradual disintegration of polyandry is caused by the negative attitude or disapproval of the younger generation toward it. In the nuclear household unit, a man lives with his "own" wife and unmarried children. The married daughter usually goes to the house of her husband/husbands. In some cases the parents stay with their married sons, while in other cases they shift to a separate household, soon after the marriage of the sons. In Zone I the parents usually build a separate house to accommodate them in their old age, where they move with their unmarried daughters when their married sons have a child. Before their departure, the parents usually distribute their property including the land and the house to their married sons, keeping for themselves some land and other movable property as they think fit to sustain them. In the original household where the brothers live with their common wife and children, the eldest brother becomes the head of the household and the other brothers are subordinate to him. This natal household (*nangma*), where the brothers live with the common wife and children, always maintains links with the newly established household (*gangun*) formed by their parents and unmarried sisters. Socioeconomic and socioreligious ties have always been kept between the *nangma* and the *gangun*.

This practice is not prevalent among the Kinnaurese of Zone III. Here the parents do not leave the natal household unit and form a separate one. In Zone II only a few cases of the *nangma-gangun* pattern exist.

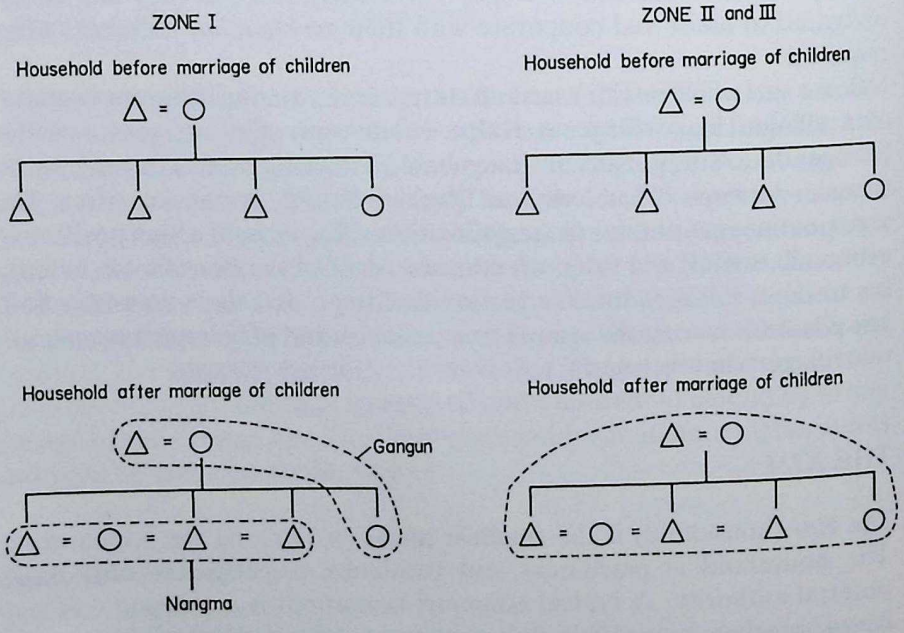

Figure 3.

As I have stated earlier, polyandry is an old custom among the Kinnaurese. Polyandrous marriage leads to the formation of the polyandrous household unit. Though the number of polyandrous households is gradually decreasing, a considerable number of such households still exist in Kinnaur. Out of the 226 households in three villages surveyed from three zones, 22.56 percent are polyandrous. Besides, 31.42 percent of the households which are now nuclear had a polyandrous base. Due to the death of some husbands or separation these units became nuclear.

On the other hand, a comparison among the polyandrous units in all three zones reveals that Zone III has the highest number of polyandrous household units (29.23 percent), followed by Zone II (20.88 percent); Zone I has the lowest frequency (17.40 percent). The frequency of polyandrous units turned into nuclear units is also the highest in Zone III and lowest in Zone I (see Table 2).

Table 2.

Hu-Wi combination in the household	Zone I		Zone II		Zone III		Total	
	No.	Per-cent	No.	Per-cent	No.	Per-cent	No.	Per-cent
$Hu_1 + Wi_1$	29	63.04	49	42.61	22	33.85	100	44.25
$Hu_2 + Wi_1$	4	8.70	11	9.57	10	15.38	25	11.06
$Hu_n + Wi_1$	4	8.70	9	7.83	4	6.15	17	7.52
$Hu_1 + Wi_2$	1	2.17	2	1.74	1	1.54	4	1.77
$Hu_1 + Wi_n$	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
$Hu_2 + Wi_2$	–	–	1	0.87	2	3.08	3	1.33
$Hu_2 + Wi_n$	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
$Hu_n + Wi_2$	–	–	3	2.61	1	1.54	4	1.77
$Hu_n + Wi_n$	–	–	–	–	2	3.08	2	0.88
$Hu_1 + Wi_1$ (previously polyandrous)	8	17.39	40	34.78	23	35.38	71	31.42
Total	46	100.00	115	100.01	65	100.00	226	100.00

Hu = Husband; Wi = Wife; 1, 2, n = number of husbands and wives; n = more than two.

MARRIAGE

Zanekang is the traditional form of marriage among these people. It is a polyandrous union in which the sons of the same parents, or of the same father but different mothers, or of the same mother but different fathers, marry a common wife. The husbands live together with the common wife in the same household and share responsibilities for the maintenance of the household. The children born of the union between the common wife and her husbands have usually one legal father. Only the eldest brother by virtue of his seniority goes to the house of the bride and performs the

marital rites and rituals. All the other brothers usually remain aloof from most of the rituals except for a few, of which the "turban-tying" ceremony is most important. Though the eldest brother plays the key role in the marriage ceremony, he has to tolerate the right of sexual access by his brothers to the common wife.

If any of the brothers marries again, the wife will also be common to all. If any brother desires to have a separate wife, he will have to leave the natal household and forego rights to the first wife and children; he will also have to pay some cash for the maintenance of the children borne up to that point by the first wife, even though he may not have been biologically responsible for them.

Besides *zanekang,* the other very popular marriage type is by elopement. It is known as *dab-dab* or *khuchis*. Cousin marriages (cross or parallel) are totally absent in Zone II and Zone III, although a few cases of marriage with the daughter of a father's sister or mother's brother have been traced out in Zone I. Sororate is permissible. A few cases of polygyny can also be found and the practice of polygyny in a polyandrous household leads to the polygynandrous (polygyny/polyandry) union. As reported earlier, marriage in the same status group, but in different lineage, is the rule, though sometimes the hierarchical order of the *khandan* is also taken into consideration.

BINANA SYSTEM

The different functional castes living in Kinnaur such as Lohar, Badhi, Nangalu, and Koli and also the Waza group work mostly for the Khosia. In exchange the latter group gives them cereals or cash. This system of work exchange between different castes of Kinnaur is known as the *binana* system. In this system Lohars prepare iron implements and silver ornaments, Badhi do the woodwork and house building, Nangalu make baskets, and Koli either weave and tailor cloth or do the leather work of the Khosia. The latter also cultivate the land of big landowning Khosia households. In exchange for these services, they receive a fixed quantity of cereals, either *phaphra, olga,* or wheat and/or cash. This *binana* system has been practiced by them for centuries.

RELIGIOUS DUALITY

In Kinnaur two different religions curiously coexist: Hinduism and Mahayanist Buddhism. Hinduism is dominant in Nachar subdivision while Pooh Tehsil, Hangrang sub-Tehsil, and parts of Maorang Tehsil of Pooh subdivision are Buddhist strongholds. On the other hand, in the

whole of Kalpa subdivision and parts of Maorang Tehsil of Pooh subdivision, we find Hinduism and Buddhism supplementing each other. Thornton also confirms this distribution. He writes, "The religion of Koonawar is Brahminism in the south, in the north, Lamaic Buddhism, in the middle, a mixture of the two systems" (1854:518). Earlier, however, Buddhism probably dominated the entire Kinnaur area. "Although the Kunawurrees are recognised as Hindoos by descent and general profession, they most generally follow Lama religion" (Frazer 1820:256–257). In spite of the presence of Hinduism as the dominant religion in Kinnaur, the total absence of the Brahman caste is definitely curious and important. Brahmans do not live in Kinnaur, and whenever the Kinnaurese need to get the help of this priestly caste, they bring them from Simla District. Both Frazer (1820) and Thornton (1854) also observed the absence of Brahmans in this district more than a century ago.

The presence of two different religions in Kinnaur has given birth to two different complexes. These are Hinduism (Devi-Devta complex) present in the Hindu-dominated areas and Buddhism (Lakhan-Labrang complex) present in Pooh subdivision, where Buddhism is predominant.

It may be pointed out here that other than the above two religions, no other religion has any significant impact on the Kinnaurese. Though the Moravian Mission started functioning long ago in the Pooh and Kalpa areas, it could make almost no impression upon the Kinnaurese, and had to close.

HINDUISM (DEVI-DEVTA COMPLEX)

The Devi-Devta complex is associated with the religion of the Kinnaurese present in the whole of Nachar and Kalpa subdivisions and parts of Pooh subdivision. The Devi-Devta may be divided into two categories — the principle deities and the subordinate deities. Each of the principal and subordinate deities has an area over which the deity concerned exerts authority and power. In the past, when the deity was the socioreligious and administrative head of an area, everything was done with the consent of the deity. Nothing could be done without the approval of the deity concerned. For starting any economic pursuit like trade or migration with sheep or goats, or any social ceremony like marriages or funerals, or any religious festivity, the deity's advice and approval was essential. Even now the Kinnaurese seek the advice and approval of the deity when they are faced with some acute crisis.

As I have already stated, each principal or subordinate deity has its own jurisdiction within which it exercises power and authority. This territorial jurisdiction usually coincides with the sociopolitical or administrative

divisions like the *khunt,* the *ghori,* the *gaon,* and the *kim.* The *khunt* have the *khunt* deity and the *ghori* have the *ghori* deity. Similarly, each *gaon* (village) has the *gaon* deity and the *kim* (household) has the *kim* deity (*kimsu*). Usually the *khunt* is presided over by a principal deity. As the *khunt* is constituted of some *ghori,* so under each principal or *khunt* deity there are some *ghori* deities. Again under each *ghori* deity there are some *gaon* or village deities. And in each household of a village there is one household deity, known as *kimsu.*

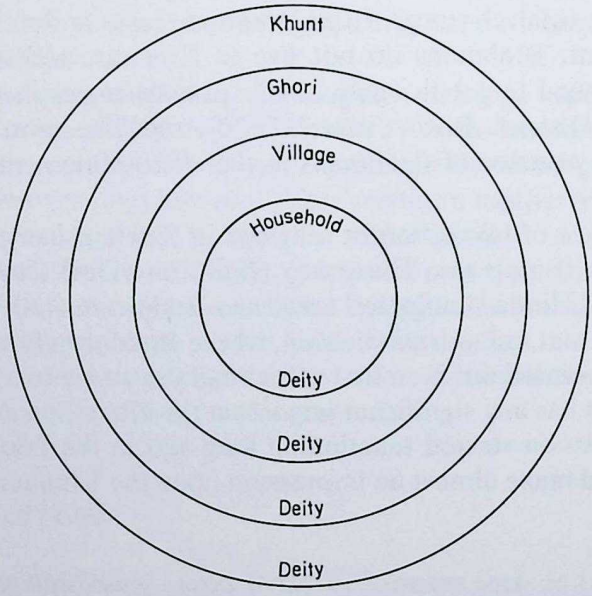

Figure 4.

The abode of each principal or subordinate deity is the temple called *santhang,* and temple functionaries are employed to serve the deity. For the *khunt, ghori,* or *gaon* deity there is a temple which enshrines the deity; but for the *kimsu* usually no particular building is constructed. Either a room or a portion of a room is allotted to it. Each of the *khunt, ghori,* or *gaon* deities has a name. But the household deity does not have a name. All of them are called simply *kimsu.*

In Kinnaurese culture, "the role of the deity in the social life is determined by the network of relationships between the deities of one *khunt* with that of the other and the function is performed by the deities through the temple functionary" (Sen 1970:138). In Kinnaur there are six principal deities belonging to six *khunt*, namely Atharabis, Rajgram, Wangpo, Shua (upper and lower), Thukpa (inner and outer), and Hangrang. In Atharabis, Rajgram, and Wangpo, the *khunt* deity is Maheshwar (Moinsires). For Shua *khunt* the principal deity is Chandika. Similarly, for Thukpa, the presiding deity is Badrinarayan. In Hangrang the *khunt* deity (Dabla) and the set of its subordinate deities are not well organized. This

is possibly due to the comparatively powerful influence of Buddhism there. Maheshwar (Moinsires) of Atharabis, Rajgram, and Wangpo and Chandika of Shua are believed to be brothers and sister. The Nages and Narains are also related to them.

Each *ghori* has a presiding deity, called *ghori devi* or *devta*. This *ghori devi* or *devta* is related to the village deities under its jurisdiction. All the *gaon devi* or *devtas* within a *ghori* are also related to one another. A number of village deities belonging to one *ghori* sometimes have the same name, and those deities who have the same name are treated as brothers or sisters, such as the Nages of Brua and Sapni villages under Sangla Tehsil, who are believed to be brothers. The Narains of Rogi, Miru, Sapni, and Shong are also considered to be brothers. It is even seen that deities bearing the same name, although living in different districts, are treated as related. For example the Nages of Tangnu village (in Rohru Tehsil of the present Simla District) and the Nages of Sangla under Kamru *ghori* are brothers. In the same way Badrinath/Badrinarayan of Kamru and Badrinath of Garhwal are believed to be related.

The Kinnaurese, living in the Hindu-dominated areas of Kinnaur, belong to various religious cults. Of these cults the important ones are the following:

(1). *Devi* cult which covers various *devis* of Kinnaur such as Bhima Kali at Kamru; Chandika at Kothi and Ropa; Ukha (Usha) *devi* at Nachar and Bara Khamba; Kali at Chuling.

(2). *Siva* cult which includes Mahasu at Telengi; Maheshwar at Chagaon, Gramang, and Sungra.

(3). *Visnu* cult: Badrinath at Kamru; Badrinarayan at Batseri; Naranes at Kilba, Chagaon, Sungra, and Shuang; Kuldeo Narayan at Namgia.

(4). *Dabla* cult covers Dabla at Chango, Hango, Kanam, Dabling, Dubling.

(5). *Kuldeo* cult includes Kuldeo at Dutrang (Bhabha) and Gharshu (Nachar).

(6). *Nag* cult: Nages at Kandhar, Natpa, Yula, Bari, Barang, Mebar, Brua, Sapni, Rakcham, Sangla, and other villages.

Besides these, there are some other cults such as *Yulsa* cult, *Naidak* cult, *Gyalba* cult, *Deodum* cult.

The *devi* and *devta* of Kinnaur maintain their ties closely by paying visits to one another at certain intervals. This system of visiting one another by the deities is known as the *bioling* system, which is generally practised by the village deities in a *ghori*. In this system, the presiding deity of a village invites the same of another village for a visit, and, accordingly, on a fixed day, the deity of the latter village visits the village of the former deity. Again after a period of two to three years several village deities of a *ghori* meet together at one village and discuss the welfare of the villages.

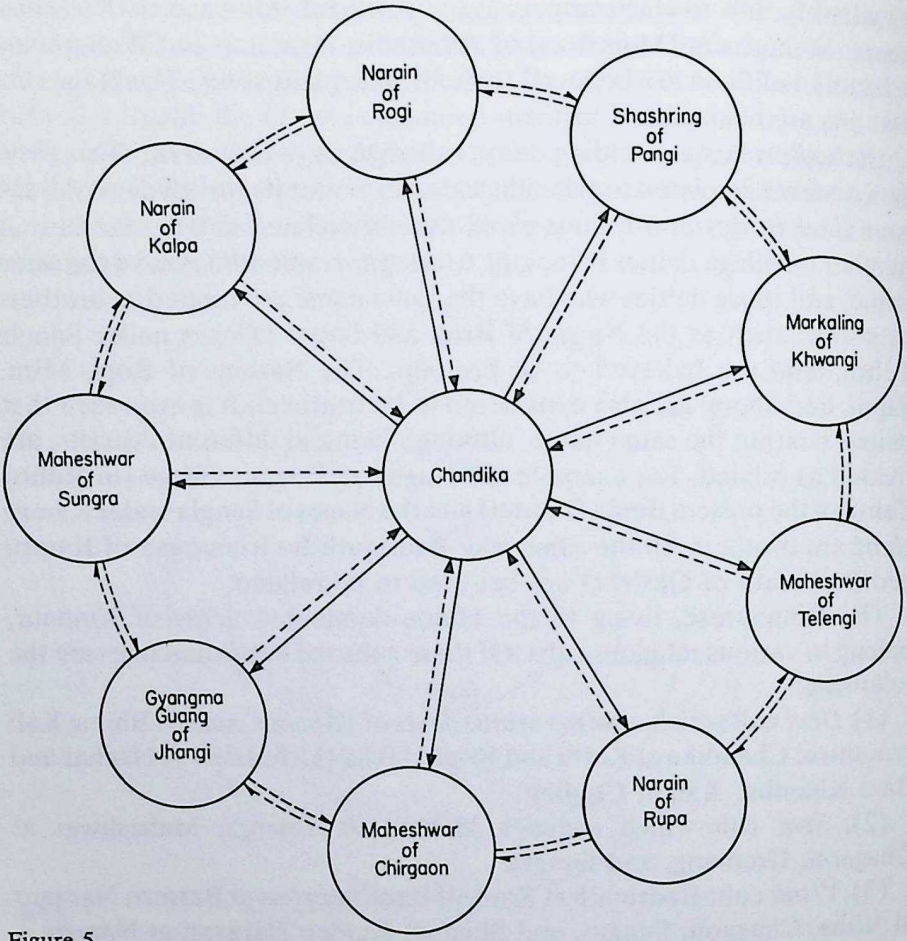

Figure 5.

Besides the *bioling* system, there is the *boning* system and the *parganait* system of visits. In the *boning* system the *khunt* deities visit different *ghori* under their respective jurisdiction. The information of the visit of the *khunt* deity is sent through the *halbandi* [messenger] to different *ghori* and villages under the *khunt,* and, accordingly, they prepare themselves to receive the *khunt* deity. The visit is usually made every five to eight years.

But in the case of the *parganait* system, the subordinate deities (*ghori* or *gaon devi* and *devta*) visit the *khunt* deity to pay homage to the *khunt* deity. This type of visit takes place every seven to twelve years.

The temple administration in Kinnaur is run by a host of functionaries known as the *kardar.* They actually serve the deity and control the socioreligious administration of the sociopolitical units like the *gaon,* the *ghori,* or the *khunt*. They stand between the villagers and the deity. These functionaries (*kardar*) are the *pujaras* [priest], the *grokch* [oracle who speaks to the villagers on behalf of the deity], the *mathas* [who speaks to

the deity on behalf of the villagers], the *kaithas* or *khajanchi* [accountant, who keeps the temple budget], the *chalia* [palanquin carriers], the *kroshya* [temple guard], etc. Almost all these posts are hereditary. After the death of the father the son holds the office. These functionaries get the products of the temple land as remuneration for their service.

As I have stated, these *kardar* stand between the common people and the deity. A common villager cannot approach the deity directly. He has to state his difficulties to the *mathas.* The *mathas,* on behalf of this villager, approaches the deity and narrates the problems which the villager is facing. The deity then gives his/her verdict to the *grokch* who, in his turn, discloses the will of the deity to the villager. In this way the villager comes to know the god's will.

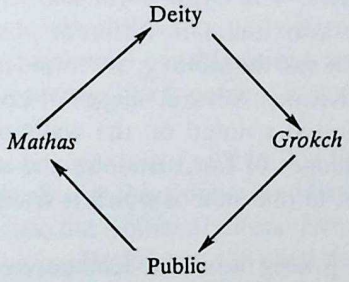

Figure 6.

Most of the posts of the *kardar* are held by the superior *khandan,* who usually belong to the Orang status group. In a village in Kinnaur, the offices of the *pujaras,* the *grokch,* the *mathas,* and the *kaithas* are held by the superior *khandan* like Surag, Sangchain, and Surein, all of them belonging to the Orang status group.

BUDDHISM

In Kinnaur the second religious complex that prevails in Pooh and Kalpa subdivisions is Buddhism. The centers of this religious complex are the various monasteries, headed by the lamas. Of course, there are a few monasteries which are controlled by the *zomos* [nuns]. The lamas here are mainly of two types, the *dukpa* and the *gelukpa,* though a third type, the *nyingma,* may be seen in some places.

> The Lamas in Koonawaur are the three sects, Geloopa, Dookpa and Neengma . . . The Geloopas or Gelookpas are reckoned the highest; since the heads to their religion at Teshoo Loomboo and Lahassa are of the same sect. They wear yellow cloth garments and caps of the same or various shapes. The Dookpas are dressed indifferently, but have red caps; and the Neengmas wear the same or go bare headed; the two former do not marry but there is no restriction on the Neengma (Gerard 1841:117).

The big monasteries provide training for the lamas. Only the Khosia boys are allowed to take the training, which is for three years only. After the successful completion of the training, the trainees become lamas and are entitled to perform the religious rites and rituals.

Some of the Khosia girls do not want to marry. Instead, they want to spend their lives in meditation. They become *zomo*s and live in the nunneries. These *zomo*s belong either to the *Dukpa* or to the *Gelukpa* sect.

On entering a village where Buddhism reigns, one has to cross the *kankani* [the village gate]. By the side of the village gate one finds the *mane*, a heap of stone and slate on which *OM MANE PADME HUM* is inscribed. The prayer flag (*tharchok*) is found hoisted on the houses, as also on the monasteries. The *chosten* (or *chorten*) and the *donktens* [religious tombs] are also found in different places. The temples or monasteries, the *lakhan* and the *labrang,* are found in almost all villages in Kalpa and Pooh subdivisions. Several images of Lord Buddha and other Buddhist saints are found painted on the walls of these monasteries. Metallic or earthen images of Lord Buddha and some other saints are installed in the center, at one side of which is situated the large prayer-wheel (*dumgyur*).

It is somewhat surprising how the Kinnaurese of central Kinnaur practice the two religions simultaneously. While they call the lamas to perform some rituals in their houses, they go to the *devi/devtas* also for many problems. While the *chorten* and the *tharchok* are found in many houses, portraits of various Hindu gods and goddesses are also found hanging on the walls. The people express their faith in both the religions.

THE CULTURAL TRANSITION

In recent years some significant changes have occurred in the culture of the Kinnaurese. Even in the late 1950's this area was somewhat isolated, and contact with the rest of the world was irregular. But with the introduction of improved transportation and communication, the isolation has completely disappeared, resulting in great changes in this area. While they faced some difficulties and economic depression with the elimination of trade with Tibet, opening up the area has given them new sources of livelihood to revitalize their depressed economy. Furthermore, while modernization and modern education gradually compel them to cast away old customs like polyandry, which kept them together so long and reduced the possibility of land fragmentation, they now risk partition and division of property and invite economic suffering in some cases. Cash income has built up their economy, but the introduction of the market and cash economy has weakened the *binana* system, the socioeconomic

institution which facilitates cooperation between different caste groups. Gradual population growth, cessation of trade, and land fragmentation, have left some Khosia with very little. As a result the big Khosia landowners engage their compatriots as laborers or sharecroppers. On the other hand many Koli, who so long cultivated the land of the Khosia, have regular cash income from various construction and development works. Again, these welfare schemes have invited laborers from other areas also; a few of them have married Kinnaurese and settled there, and this has broken the age-old marriage regulation of ethnic endogamy. The younger generation does not approve of polyandry and the nuclear households are consequently increasing.

Though transportation has been improved, the seasonal mass migration has stopped. The brothers now want to stay in the house and to have separate wives. As a result, the family unity in many cases has broken down. Further, due to financial considerations and the growth of individualistic attitudes, marriage by elopement is overshadowing the traditional negotiation type.

In religion also changes are clearly visible. Traditional religious beliefs and practices are gradually breaking down, and Brahmanical Hinduism is making inroads deep into the Kinnaur culture. Even in Pooh subdivision, where Tibetan Mahayanist Buddhism was once dominant, Brahmanical Hinduism is consolidating its position. People there have developed faith in Hinduism. As Buddhism gradually loses ground, the people lose interest in becoming a lama or *zomo*. The opening of schools, hospitals, libraries, offices, new business centers, easy availability of radios, opening of technical and craft training schools, and other improvements have paved the way for new prospects to the Kinnaurese and shown a new meaning of life to them. And thus the traditional Kinnaur is dying, while a modern one is emerging out of its ruins.

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Changing Patterns of Multiethnic Interaction in the Western Himalayas

FRANCES L. NITZBERG

The Himalayas offer not only great cultural and social diversity but also a rich variety of social processes and social changes. This paper will examine the effect of changing patterns of multiethnic interaction on ethnic identity and the social organization of two ethnic groups in the Indian Himalayas.

In 1960 Gerald Berreman stated that "culture areas . . . exist only to the extent that there is effective isolation and/or lack of communication among groups. The distinctness of a . . . cultural group corresponds with the degree, duration, and kind of isolation of the people involved" (Berreman 1960:788–789).

My observations indicate that the differences between ethnic groups in the Himalayas are not necessarily the result of relative isolation and "cultural drift, the process of divergent or differential cultural change" (Berreman 1960:787). In some areas there is and has always been considerable multiethnic contact and interdependence. In some instances this interaction reinforces sociocultural diversity and in others it brings about emulation of one group by another.

Fredrik Barth (1956:1079) has pointed out that in plural societies there is a "combination of ethnic segmentation and economic interdependence. Thus, the 'environment' of any one ethnic group is not only defined by natural conditions but also by the presence and activities of the other ethnic groups on which it depends."

Himalayan terrain rarely permits large communities, but increasingly they are being brought into regional, state, and national political and economic systems. Because the different integrative processes are

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uneven and out of phase with each other, they may be more disruptive than constructive, and their impact on ethnic identity and boundaries varies significantly from group to group (cf., Barth 1969).

The evidence from Chamba District, Himachal Pradesh, India (located east of Kashmir and south of Ladakh) supports Barth's contention that "ecologic considerations . . . should offer the point of departure" (1956:1079) by enabling us to understand more clearly than by a cultural drift model some of the processes by which relationships change within an ecosystem.

Ecological differences are a major factor in the differing impact of the Chamialis of Chamba District on the Brahmauris and Churahis. Each is identified with a particular region (*tehsil*) of the district. Together, they represent three of the seven major ethnic groups in Chamba. The data on the Chamialis and Churahis come primarily from my own research in 1967–1968 and summer 1971, while my analysis of the Brahmauris derives from articles by William Newell and Government of India reports as well as my own observations.

The Chamialis are located in and around Chamba Town, the district headquarters and former capital. This sedentary agricultural population in the low hills is better educated, more urban-oriented, and more orthodox in caste and marriage practices than are the Brahmauris and Churahis. Most district level government workers are Chamialis.

The Brahmauris maintain permanent homes in the middle hills east of Chamba Town. Brahman and Rajput Brahmauris are thought to have migrated into Brahmaur in the ninth century, while the other castes came from the plains in the seventeenth century. They move seasonally from one altitude zone to another with their animals and for employment, thereby maintaining contact with Chamialis and plains Indians.

The third group, the Churahis, live in the 4,000–8,000 foot middle hills north of Chamba Town. They are largely sedentary, yet invest a disproportionate time on their few animals. Most are descendants of people who settled in Churah more than 2,000 years ago. Even today they maintain their cultural distinctiveness despite recent penetration by government personnel and programs.

BRAHMAURIS[1]

The vast majority of Brahmauris are primarily agriculturalists. However, with a population density of 1,500 per square mile of cultivated land, most Brahmauri families cannot produce enough grain for the entire

[1] The following description of the Brahmauris is based on Negi (1963); Newell (1967, 1970); Nitzberg (n.d.a., n.d.b.); Singh (1963); and my own inquiries during August 1971.

year. Consequently perhaps half the families also maintain large flocks of sheep and goats. By tradition and necessity, lack of fodder, severe climate, and inadequate agriculture production have made them highly transhumant.

In November nearly all Brahmauris, including those without animals, leave for Chamba Town, the lower hills or the plains. Families often split up, some to work in towns and large villages, some to find low pastures for their flocks and a few to farm their land in the low hills of adjacent Kangra District. After everyone returns in April to plant maize, wheat and barley, some men continue on to high distant grazing lands, and return to their villages only in the fall for the harvest. Nearly all Brahmauris traditionally prospered from herding and winter work.

The caste system in Brahmaur includes Brahmans, Gaddis (who are technically a Scheduled Tribe consisting of four partially amalgamated high castes) and a few low castes. The Gaddis have been culturally and numerically dominant, though economic differences among the higher castes were minimal until quite recently. Before 1948 the raja permitted any household to have land but only as much as it could cultivate on its own. With marginal agricultural productivity, the economy could not support significant full-time specialization of labor by caste nor more than a very few landless artisans or low caste menials. Virgin land was exhausted by 1900, and local lineages successfully prevented outsiders from settling or sonless families from adopting, despite state laws permitting land development.

Status differences among high castes were minimal; many Brahmans interdined with Gaddis, and in some remote areas intermarried also. All castes drank and ate meat. Brahmans did not object to being called Gaddis, despite the technical inaccuracy. The Chamba State army was manned almost entirely by Gaddis. Both Brahmans and Gaddis enjoyed high prestige in the state, a reflection perhaps of ancient times when the village of Brahmaur was the state capital.

CHURAHIS

Culturally distinct and remote Churah was not completely subdued and incorporated into Chamba State until the fifteenth century, followed by slow immigration and population growth. Even today it is still largely self-sufficient agriculturally as double-cropping is possible in most places.

The Churahis kept fewer animals than the Brahmauris, so fodder was little problem during severe winters. In the summer, entire families took the animals to high pastures near their villages or over into the Pangi Valley. Those who pastured their flocks near their villages planted maize

and potatoes. As in Brahmaur, the land tenure system prevented any caste from monopolizing land, which in turn brought about economic uniformity and prevented significant caste specialization of labor. Before 1948 there was also no land pressure and outsiders were welcome to settle. In contrast to the Brahmauris, lineages had no formal control over disposition of property, new settlers, or adoption of sons.

Nearly half the Churahis belong to low or unclean castes. While they control slightly less land per capita, they are more willing to work as porters. Before 1882 they had been subjected to forced labor (*begari*), and some aspects of this system probably continued for several decades after that.

Churahis differ markedly from Chamialis and Brahmauris both socially and culturally. High castes often intermarry though low castes are endogamous. All castes practice cross-cousin marriages, divorce and widow remarriage. Marriages are seldom arranged. Brahmans are not everywhere the highest ranking caste nor the only respected religious practitioners.

Churahis prefer to keep to themselves. They persist in their own traditions, despite criticism of their social and cultural unorthodoxy and their awareness of customs in the lower hills. Immigrants have usually adopted Churahi customs quickly to avoid local ridicule or boycott. Most Churahis themselves avoid leaving their region even for a few days because they dislike the ridicule of orthodox Chamialis.

RECENT INFLUENCES

Given the respective social and spatial orientations of the Brahmauris and Churahis, it is not surprising that their responses to similar external forces have differed.

Despite recent rapid increase of both population and soil erosion throughout the district, new laws restrict free use of the environment. Virgin land can no longer be cleared and terraced, and use of trees and other forest products has been severely limited. Grazing permits are now required and have forced flock reduction. Land is now privately owned and can be sold to anyone without lineage control. Couples can adopt children and women can inherit land, a recently accorded right that women are increasingly exercising.

New facilities are increasingly provided by government — schools, roads, clinics, disease eradication, improved breeding stock, agricultural and horticultural facilities and information, electricity and piped water. Locally elected councils have replaced many appointed officials. Horticulture has been encouraged, and jobs in construction, road building, and minor government posts abound.

EFFECT ON BRAHMAURIS

However, these forces have sometimes had a negative impact. Brahmaur can no longer absorb the rapidly increasing population. Severe erosion has decreased cultivable land quantitatively and qualitatively, and there is greater pressure on pastures and forests. Brahmauris must seek even more distant grazing lands at greater physical risk to themselves and their flocks. Yet many continue to turn to herding to supplement their income with the decline in per capita farm land.

At the same time there is evidence of a major sociocultural reorientation. Brahmauris spend more time working in Chamba Town, and permanent and temporary jobs in Brahmaur and Chamba are increasingly sought. Brahmans have been the main beneficiaries because they have deliberately run for local councils, increased their government contacts, sought education, and gained favor with government officials. The Gaddis have been less willing to be involved, to their political and economic detriment. As a consequence their social status is declining both relatively and absolutely.

In order to gain both local economic dominance and social acceptance by Chamialis, the Brahmans increasingly dissociate themselves from the Gaddis. Instead they emulate Chamba orthodoxy by becoming vegetarian, by abstaining from alcohol, and by not dining with Gaddis. While Brahmauri Brahmans can now claim Gaddi affiliation, which would give them economic privileges as members of a Scheduled Tribe, they are unwilling to do so.

The Gaddis themselves show greater reluctance to identify as Gaddis, particularly in villages closer to Chamba Town where government penetration is greater. They now tend to use their original caste names, reversing the process of caste amalgamation as Gaddi life style becomes less viable and prestigious. To call someone a Gaddi in Chamba Town is now derogatory, a marked change in the last twenty years.

In large part this process represents a recognition of growing dependence on the "outside" for income. Declining productivity in traditional pursuits has forced the Brahmauris to migrate out permanently or to spend more time working in towns. Since such casual labor carries no prestige, these high caste "tribals" feel compelled to minimize their declining state. Thus, the process of changing ethnic identity has been inspired by economic necessity.

EFFECT ON CHURAHIS

The Churahi way of life has been less disrupted by these external forces. Although virgin land has not been available since 1948, population

pressure is only now being felt. A venereal disease eradication program around 1960 sparked a sharp and immediate increase in the birth rate. A decline in both per capita landholdings and uncultivated grazing land has been accompanied by a gradual shift from sheep and goats to cattle. This is apparently due not only to a largely unconscious recognition of decreased pasture land and less profit from sheep and goats but also a need for more fertilizer, and a preference for local road work rather than herding during the summer. Few Churahis view large flocks as practical anyway. Winter migration to the low hills or the plains is never considered, and they cannot store enough winter fodder or provide housing for more than about thirty animals.

Low caste Churahis were the first to supplement their income through road work, having slightly less land and the stronger tradition of forced short-term labor. The high castes were initially reluctant, and in the mid-1960's those with surplus land and capital were encouraged to plant orchards. It first appeared that the growers would eventually reap high profits. However, three years of drought (1967–1970) forced even the high castes to work on the roads, and in 1971 overproduction of apples throughout the state drastically forced down the price of apples, making it unprofitable to market them without local wholesalers, storage, or transport facilities.

Disillusioned by this lack of infrastructure, high castes now resist other government efforts to improve production. They are withdrawing from the outside world and its pressures. This is also evident in their reluctance to work in construction or road building more than one or two hours' walk from their own villages, despite a massive central government hydroelectric project twenty miles away that would have employed and housed anyone who was willing to work.

Thus Churahi men are not emulating the customs of Chamialis and show no inclination to migrate out, even temporarily or at short distances. Women do marry into the lower hills, when possible, but less often than Brahmauri women do and only when it is economically advantageous. Generally, their caste ranking is higher than their husband's in these cases.

Caste differentiation in Churah, if anything, has decreased in the last few years, facilitated by further economic leveling, by the spread of education, and by the impact of numerous low caste officials. Intercaste marriage continues, and there is increasing toleration of high caste-low caste marriages (i.e., clean and unclean).

Thus Churahis have responded to recent events by steadfastly maintaining their traditional social system, only partly because they do not yet face the extreme land pressure that exists in Brahmaur. They are somewhat demoralized by their inability to successfully diversify their economy through horticulture, and in 1971 took recourse to illegally

brewing and selling applejack. Hopefully the increase in alcoholism is only temporary.

The effect of eventual severe land pressure and a possible increase in nonagricultural jobs in Churah still cannot be predicted. But thus far ethnic and regional identity has become stronger despite increased contact with the outside. Economic change has not so much forced social change as intensified traditionalism.

CONCLUSION

The Brahmauri response to outside forces and people is perhaps what we expect today in South Asia; namely, sociocultural emulation of those on whom there is increasing dependence. This has not been due to increased contact, since the Brahmauri migration cycle has meant contact for centuries. However, the relationship has changed from one of interdependence to one of dominance and subservience. The dominant Chamialis also pressure Brahmauris to Sanskritize their practices. The Brahmauris accurately feel socially and economically threatened and have apparently concluded that their economic future lies in status emulation.

The Churahis, on the other hand, have responded by social withdrawal, by resisting social change, and by pressuring outsiders to adapt to their customs. They did not historically feel themselves economically or socially interdependent with Chamialis, and today they resist and resent outside programs that would bring about such interdependence, or worse, dependence. Significant contact with the outside is recent and suspect. What little economic gain the Churahis perceive in their new relationship with Chamialis, they do not yet perceive any need for sociocultural emulation, nor are they convinced that contact will be advantageous in the long run.

Thus, the situation in Chamba District is one in which the changing nature of long-standing multiethnic contact and interdependence is bringing about emulation of Chamialis by Brahmauris, while the recent intensification of Chamiali contact with Churahis has brought about resistence to increased interdependence and has reinforced sociocultural distinctiveness.

The past and present differences between Brahmauris and Chamialis have not been a consequence of isolation and cultural drift. And clearly, increased contact between Churahis and Chamialis is not bringing about sociocultural convergence. The concept of cultural drift would have provided little help in understanding the processes that are occurring.

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An Additional Perspective on the Nepali Caste System

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I. Although an eminent member of my profession said he only indulged in such activity in the privacy of his bathtub, I'm going to permit myself the luxury of historical speculation. The purpose of this somewhat heady exercise is to draw attention to a problem in Nepali history, and more broadly, in the comparative study of Indian and Nepali society. Simply stated, the problem is a difference in caste structure between India and Nepal, on either side of the Maha Kali River, which marks the border between Kumaon and Nepal's western districts. This problem asks for a solution, and I am sanguine enough to offer you my speculations about it, because if this explanation is not the correct one, by offering it I am able to bring to my colleagues' attention a development in Nepali history whose significance has yet to be appreciated or explored. This historical development is the existence *in a crucial region* and *at a crucial time* of a powerful mountain empire. For firm knowledge of this empire's existence we owe thanks to the great Orientalist, Tucci (1956, 1962) and his explorations in the western border regions of Nepal and Tibet. The suggestion I wish to make, in the most general terms, is this: whatever additional elements and events may have contributed to Nepal's caste system, one must not overlook a flowing together in western Nepal, subsequent to the twelfth century, of two ethnic groups. One was moving along the southern flanks of the Himalayan chain and into Nepal from the west. The other originated on the plains of India and moved into Nepal from a more southerly direction. The historically important fact, I suggest, is that in western Nepal these two groups came into contact and mingled when the mountain group — the one that had entered Nepal from the west — was represented by a powerful kingdom or by groups of chiefdoms that recently had been under its sway, if not locally ruled by its representatives. But first, let me explain the respects in which I find

Nepal's caste system unique, and state at the outset that in two fundamental respects I do not consider it unique.

At the level of generality found useful by social evolutionists, no fundamental differences appear between caste in India and Nepal. Moreover, at the level discussed by Leach (1960), a perspective from which the Indian system of social stratification is said to be unique throughout the world, I also find no fundamental differences between caste in India and Nepal. Differences at both these levels are differences in degree, not in fundamental structural configuration. It is at a somewhat lower level of generality, a level that I will term *adjacent regional comparison*, that a difference does appear. It is this which I regard as highly significant and ask you to consider.

The difference shows up when a comparison is made between the uppermost levels of the caste system of the Indian Himalayan District of Kumaon and the adjacent Nepali regions. Summarily and principally, the difference is one involving the status of the Khas or Chhetri populations in both regions.

At this regional level of comparison I will ask first how Nepal's uniqueness is to be defined, and then I will look for the explanation of this difference. Both questions are important to understanding Nepal's caste system, but the latter will bear special emphasis here, because the answer will suggest a revised interpretation of the process by which the Nepali caste system was formed.

Traditionally, when discussing those features of the Nepali system of stratification that set it apart from the Indian system, the emphasis has been placed on two populations and their effects upon one another. Both populations were intrusive. The earlier arrivals were Tibeto-Burman speakers. In the area under consideration, western Nepal, and more particularly the area with which I am best acquainted at first hand, the Bheri and Kali Gandaki drainages, the Tibeto-Burman speakers of most importance were Magars. The later arrivals were the Brahmans and Rajputs who were fleeing from the plains of India during the period of Muslim invasions.

My purpose now is to suggest that a third factor must be added. This also is an intrusive population, a population of Pahari-speaking, eastward-moving Khas.[1] The Tibeto-Burman speakers, because they

[1] Scholars disagree on many points regarding the origin of a population calling itself Khas (Grierson 1927:180; Hermans 1954:35; Hodgson 1848; Turner 1928). It is not certain whether they came from Central Asia, as part of the migration which sent Aryan communities into the Indus Valley during the second millennium B.C., or whether they were an autochthonous mountain population, belonging to the Asian Geographical Race, who later became Aryanized, gave up their native tongue, and adopted a Sanskrit-derived dialect. Indeed, Lévi felt that little more could be said about the Khas than that they were a name in the Hindu law books. ("Le nom des Khasas s'était perpetué dans les codes; mais aucune notion positive ou réelle ne s'y rattachait") (Lévi 1905:259). But even at this remote period one point of agreement based on classical Sanskrit authors, as well as on Greek and Roman

show so little Buddhist influence, probably entered Nepal prior to the seventh and eighth centuries A.D., the plains Brahmans and Rajputs apparently came in largest numbers from the twelfth century downwards.[2] The Khas seemed to have been entering western Nepal, pushed

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geographers, would seem to exist: namely, that a people called Khas inhabited portions of the Hindu Kush and western Himalayas, and possibly left a trace in place names such as Kashmir and Kashgar in Chitral (Grierson 1927:2–8; Atkinson 1886:375–378). And since Lévi, studies of Nepali and related Himalayan languages have further reduced the sense of Khas unreality.

Nepali, the *lingua franca* of Nepal and the language of government and education, is derived from Sanskrit and "appears to have belonged originally to a dialect group which included the ancestors of Gujarati, Sindhi, Lahnda, Panjabi and Hindi" (Turner 1931: xiii). Although most closely related to Kamaoni, which is spoken in the Indian hill district immediately to the west of the Nepal border, it also has certain features in common with all the Indo-Aryan languages along the southern face of the Himalayas (Turner 1931: xiii). To this wider group of mutually unintelligible but related Himalayan languages Grierson has given the name Pahari (*pāharī*), and has divided them into Western Pahari (spoken in Jaunsar-Bawar, the Simla Hills, Kulu, Mundi, Suket, Chamba, and Western Kashmir), Central Pahari (spoken in Kumaon and Garhwal), and Eastern Pahari (spoken in Nepal) (Grierson 1927:1). Grierson believed that linguistic influences from Rajasthan, associated with Rajput immigration, had all but obliterated the original tongue of the Khas. Turner questions this and suggests that "the close resemblance noted by Grierson, of the Pahari languages with the Rajasthani is due rather to the preservation of common original features than to the introduction of common innovations" (1931:xiii). Basing his hypothesis regarding the relation between Nepal and modern Indo-Aryan languages on the latter, sounder procedure, he finds that the distribution of the Pahari dialects "is intelligible if these languages were carried into their present habitat by the migration of the Khas . . . from their earlier haven in the Northwest" (1931:xiii). I cannot stress too strongly that acceptance of the hypothesis put forward in this paper does not entail belief in a genetically well-defined Khas tribe and a *Drang nach Osten*. On the contrary, it is very likely that during their spread down the Himalayas from the northwest the Khas absorbed many immigrants, including Gujars and Rajputs, as well as some Dom, the menials of Garhwal and Kumaon, and probably more than a few Tibeto-Burman speaking peoples (Grierson 1927:8–10, 102). Nor does it entail belief in diffusion of a total and unvarying cultural configuration. What is implied is a long-continued slow movement of relatively small groups who shared — in varying degrees and with modifications reflecting different periods of history and geographical location — a heritage that as a minimum included: (1) a sense of racial separation from Tibetan and other trans-Himalayan populations, (2) a Sanskrit-derived language, (3) various customs relating to marriage, and (4) an ethos stressing rule and military capacity.

According to both Joshi and Srivastava, who studied Khas in Kumaon (Almora District, U.P.), their marriage customs included the following: a Khas could take a wife from any caste except the untouchable category and both hypogamous and hypergamous marriages were recognized; marriage could be dissolved by mutual consent; and marriages with widows and divorcees were recognized (Joshi 1929; Srivastava 1966:190–191). Warlike propensities among the Khas were noted in classical Sanskrit literature and in later times a twelfth-century chronicle describes them as "a veritable thorn in the side of Kashmir rulers" (Grierson 1927:6). Still later in Kumaon, where Khas chiefs held principalities up to the sixteenth century but subsequently came under the sway of Rajputs, their militancy could not be completely stifled. Although they sometimes could be forced to pay tribute to the Hindu Rajput kings of Kumaon, "on other occasions they revolted and wreaked vengeance on the immigrant Hindu 'tyrants' " (Srivastava 1966).

[2] In western Nepal Hindu influences must have been felt from an early date, whether mediated by pilgrims trekking to mountain shrines, by traders, or by occasional Rajput mountain dynasties. The influences became more intense, however, with the heightening of Muslim pressure in North India. The center of resistance to the Central Asian horsemen was

from Kumaon perhaps by immigrant Brahmans and Rajputs, from the ninth century on; and what is of utmost significance for the interpretation I wish to propose, is that we now know these Khas, in the rice-growing regions surrounding the western Nepali town of Jumla, established a powerful political domain. Known as the Malla Kingdom, it included at its height much of westernmost Nepal and Tibet, as well as chiefdoms in the Bheri and Kali Gandaki drainages; Mustang near the source of the Kali Gandaki; and possibly regions as far west as Kaski, near present-day Pokhara. In addition, we find that during the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries raiding parties of Magars under Khas leaders from the Malla Kingdom traveled eastward to the Kathmandu Valley itself (Regmi 1965:230–300, 519, 522–523, 526; Petech 1958:102–103, 108, 113–114, 193–194; Lévi 1905: vol. 2, 217–218). While not overlooking the effects on the Nepali caste system both of the Tibeto-Burman speakers and the plains Brahmans and Rajputs, I do wish to emphasize the probable importance, heretofore overlooked, of the Khas and their Malla Kingdom. I believe it is here one will find an essential and neglected clue to the marked difference between the caste system of Kumaon and Nepal — a difference later codified in Nepal and thus made official throughout the country.

Let me very briefly indicate the fundamental respects in which I see the caste systems of Nepal and India as alike. Looking at India and Nepal from a perspective represented most recently and forcefully among anthropologists by Marvin Harris (1968), whose lineage includes Julian Steward (1955) and ultimately, Marx, I would argue that both belong to

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in Rajasthan and remained there until Akbar wiped out the defenders of Chitor for the last time in 1567 A.D. Prior to this date frequent defeats at the hands of the Muslims and continual feuding among themselves drove many Rajasthan Rajputs to the protective hills of the Deccan and the Himalayas. One Rajasthan tradition tells of an emigration to Nepal from Mewar in the late twelfth century during a period of warfare between the Chitor dynasty and Mohammad of Ghori (Tod 1950:209). In 1303 A.D. Chitor was sacked for a second time by Ala-ud-din of the Khalji dynasty, and both Rajput and Nepali traditions tell of emigration to Nepal during this period of heightened religious persecution (Hamilton 1819:129–132; Regmi 1961:14; Wright 1877:167–168). According to one tradition (Wright 1877:167–168), which is doubted by Hamilton (1819:240–244), descendants of these Chitor emigrants reached Riri Bazaar in west central Nepal in 1495 A.D. From there they went east to Bhirkot and eventually conquered the hill kingdom of Gorkha which is not far from Kathmandu. A second tradition brings the immigrants (in much greater numbers than seems probable) to Rajpur where the Great Gandak River flows into the Gangetic plain and thence to west central Nepal at Palpa (Hamilton 1819:129–132). A third brings them to Palpa, but by way of Kumaon and Jumla (Hamilton 1819:12–13, 15–16). Whatever the truth of these traditions in detail, all suggest an early fourteenth-century period of disruption in the plains. We know too that the fourteenth century marked the disintegration of the Malla Kingdom. Although no records remain to tell why the Mallas fell, their end may well have been brought about by interference with their trade. In India this would have coincided with Muslim pressures and in Tibet with the rise of Changchub Gyaltsen, who by 1350 A.D. had made himself master of the whole country (Richardson 1962:35).

the genus of archaic or preindustrial civilization, whose prototypes first arose in the Middle East and Middle America. Together India and Nepal — at what might be called the infrastructural level — are characterized, as are all examples of this genus, by a high degree of specialization, including groups of elite priests and rulers, a middle range of artisans and agriculturalists, and a lower category of menials, such as field laborers or porters. Having strong endogamous tendencies, all these orders were hierarchically arranged and they, as well as cultural and material resources, were coordinated within a religiously supported state form of organization. A characteristic of this form throughout Asia as well as in the Americas was its capacity for expansion, and for absorption of a medley of tribal groups within the structure of hierarchical specialization.

Especially in rural areas this is the undergirding social structure in both present-day India and Nepal. With respect to functionally differentiated, hierarchical specialization, the two social systems are separated only in degree, and largely the explanation is ecological. As one moves from the Indian plains to the higher mountains, fewer and fewer specialists can be withdrawn from the primary task of subsistence agriculture. The panoply of more than a dozen occupational specialists found in many localities on the Gangetic plain are reduced in the higher Nepal Himalayan regions to at most three or four.

If the Indian and Nepali caste systems can be categorized as belonging to the same genus, they also may be said to represent a single species. For not only are both systems functionally elaborated and hierarchical; both also are ritualized in terms of the same underlying theme of pollution and purity. Thus the Brahman, in India and Nepal, may be said to have elite status both in the hierarchical occupational structure of archaic civilization, and in the hierarchy defined by the concept of ritual purity. In fact, in Hindu terms, the two hierarchies have coalesced and the Brahman's position is meaningful in terms of the purity which he can dispense. Likewise the menial's position is to absorb impurity and protect others from its defilement.

As students of caste in India are well aware, endogamy, though it is the usual practice, is not followed universally. Exceptions occur, as among the Patidars of Gujarat, but always within well-defined limits and according to rule. In Nepal the number of marriages across *jāti*, and even *varna* lines probably is greater than in India; yet so far as I am aware, the difference between the two countries, in this respect as in functional differentiation, is again one of degree rather than of kind.

Summarily, we can say that in both systems the generally preferred marriages ally spouses of the same *jāti* and involve virgin brides. No deviations from this pattern occur across the line of untouchability, and when deviations other than this do occur, it is within specified limits and with specified results. Moreover, in both systems the proscriptions, limits,

rules, and results have reference to the shared and underlying hierarchical system of ritual purity.

So we move now from the Indian and Nepali caste systems as genus and species to a more particular level — the level where we compare the Kumaoni and Nepali systems as regional or subspecies variants. Needless to say, neither variant officially exists, caste having been abolished in both India and Nepal. What is compared in both cases is the extralegal sociocultural patterning.

II. The Indian Himalayas of Dehra Dun District have been described as a regional adaptation in which the major caste categories are dual: a high caste category and a low caste category (Berreman 1963). The Kumaoni District, however, as described by Srivastava (1966), is different, and I think is better described as quadruple. At the top are immigrant plains Brahmans followed by immigrant plains Rajputs. A third category, of lesser status than either of the former two, having strong endogamous tendencies, consists of Khas Brahmans and Khas Rajputs. The fourth and final category consists of low-caste artisans, or Doms. The aspect of this structure I wish to stress is the lack of intermarriage at three points: immigrant plains Brahmans and immigrant plains Rajputs generally do not intermarry, nor do either of these two generally intermarry with Khas, whether Brahman or Rajput (see Figure 1).

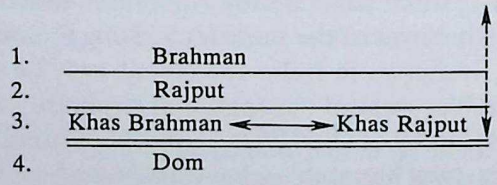

Figure 1.

The situation is different on the other side of the Maha Kali River in Nepal. Here we find not a quadruple set of categories, but a trinal set: (1) "thread wearers," consisting of immigrant plains Rajputs and Brahmans, as well as Khas Rajputs and Brahmans; (2) "liquor drinkers," consisting of the Tibeto-Burman-speaking groups; and (3) "those forbidden to touch water," or the untouchable artisan group. Another point of comparison is marriages, sanctioned traditionally by the state, between statuses within and across the "thread-wearing" and "liquor-drinking" lines. Thus immigrant Brahman men with some frequency and in strict legality married Rajput women, Khas Brahman women, Khas Rajput (or Chhetri) women, as well as Magar or Gurung women from the "liquor-drinking" group.

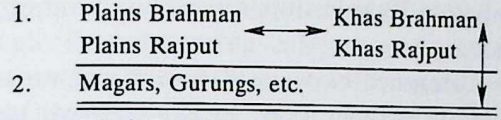

Figure 2.

A paper of this length precludes great detail, and I can only outline the reasons for my belief that, as stated in the beginning, a key and essential part of any explanation for this difference between Kumaon and Nepal was the Khas Malla Kingdom.

The differentiation of the Khas, an Indic-speaking group, into Khas Brahman and Khas Rajput may well be of very long standing but in later times it surely was reinforced by their living within the cultural orbit of Hinduism. That this reinforcement did not preclude the intermarriage of Khas Brahmans and Khas Rajputs may well be a reflection of mountain ecology — a situation in which extreme functional differentiation and strict endogamy tend to decline together. In Kumaon this Khas "looseness" with respect to endogamy was an important trait fastened upon by the immigrant Brahmans and Rajputs for creating an ethnic boundary between themselves and the Khas Brahmans and Rajputs.

After the Khas, who carried the dialect which was to become Nepali, had moved into western Nepal and Tibet, they eventually created there the powerful Malla Kingdom. Their power was based on rice-growing and on trade between western Tibet and the Indian plains,[3] and even today the kingdom's major trade route is referred to as "the royal road" (Tucci 1956:11). The historical record shows that in part also their power was based on alliances between themselves and the Magar inhabitants of the more easterly portions of the domain. It seems probable that Magar adoption of Khas clan names stems from this period,[4] and it also seems

[3] Tucci's researches in western Nepal and Tibet underline the fact that Khas military capacity was combined with a bent for administration. Originating in the eleventh century, or perhaps earlier, Khas rule at the outset consisted of two dynasties which later joined. One controlled a portion of western Tibet with its seat in Guge; the other, which held western Nepal, had its seat near Jumla. The rise of both kingdoms may have coincided with a breakdown in strong Tibetan authority which had developed under the rule of the Religious Kings (Carrasco 1959:14–19; Richardson 1962:31–33). Once the two dynasties had joined, the domain was known as the Malla Kingdom, and reached its height during the fourteenth century A.D. The fact that inscriptions are found in both Sanskrit and Nepali suggest that "Nepali was the spoken language of the Khas and the language also of popular administration in the kingdom" (Clark 1963:vii; Regmi 1965:712–716; Tucci 1956:11).

[4] West central Nepal had a large Magar population whose status was higher than the menial Dom of Kumaon. In Kumaon society was essentially dual; in Nepal it was tripartite. But this in itself would be of little political significance if it were not for the evidence we have that Khas and Magars often were allied in arms. *Hence, in addition to Khas who had high caste status and a heritage of imperial rule, the immigrant Rajputs, in west central Nepal at least, encountered Khas supported by a vigorous, militant Tibeto-Burman-speaking community. In Kumaon the Khas had no such allies.*

not at all unlikely that Khas custom was no bar to intermarriage between the two groups.

Consider the difference between Kumaon and western Nepal at the time of heavy plains immigration. In Kumaon we have no reason to believe the Khas were united as they were in Nepal around Jumla. Their smaller chiefdoms more easily fell under the immigrants' sway. Secondly, the invading immigrants in Kumaon had easier access to the plains and support from relatives or allies there. Contrastingly, Jumla itself and regions to the east were less easily accessible. The immigrants there were more completely isolated from plains support. But of still greater moment was the existence of the Malla Kingdom. Not only was it politically powerful; it also was ruled by an elite that had become Sanskritized and were ruling with a legitimacy that had been lent by Brahmans imported from Kanauj on the plains (Regmi 1965:719–720). Hodgson attributes the kind of caste system that evolved in Nepal to the proud spirit of its mountain people (Hodgson 1833). What I am arguing is that a large part of the explanation for that proud spirit lay in the existence of the Khas-dominated Malla Kingdom. Let us call it the *Nepali Khas configuration*. This configuration was powerful and its power in part derived from a looseness with regard to endogamy that permitted marital alliances between the Khas and their Magar supporters; at elite levels it combined an Indic language with Sanskritization and plains Brahman support. The historical upshot was that during the period of heavy Rajput and Brahman immigration, the immigrants were forced to accommodate more to this configuration than it to them. For in these mountains, the Khas, unlike their relatives in Kumaon, both religiously and politically led from strength. The result was that instead of a caste structure in which Khas Brahman and Rajputs were pushed down to occupy a third category, as in

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Evidence regarding the nature of Khas-Magar relations would seem to appear in Magar clan names. Hamilton believed that the original inhabitants of the western Himalayas all were of trans-Himalayan origin and that the term Khas had come from trans-Himalayan aborigines largely extirpated by invaders from the plains (Hamilton 1819:25). He believed that in Nepal all that remained of the Khas was a name. It was assumed as a "rank" by mountain chiefs and "many of their subjects or clans" who were converted to Hinduism, took the thread, and were "adopted into the military order" (Hamilton 1819:18–19); and also appeared as the name of the Nepali elite's language (*Khasbasha*, a synonym for Nepali meaning "tongue of the Khas").

In Hamilton's view the reason the Thapa clan is found among both Khas and Magars is that converted Thapa Magars became Thapa Khas, while their unconverted clan fellows remained Thapa Magars. But an alternative explanation takes account both of the existence of the Khas configuration in western Nepal and of its dominant position vis-à-vis many Magars. Records from the Malla period indicate that Magars were being led by Khas and also show that Khas clans of the period included Thapa, Budhathoki, Gharti, and Rokaya — all names which now are duplicated among the Magars. Possibly then these Magar clan names are an instance of the familiar phenomenon whereby a subordinate group borrows kin terms from a dominant group as status symbols. One suspects that in Kumaon, adopted clan-names more often would have been taken from plains Rajputs than from Khas Rajputs.

Kumaon, all Rajputs and Brahmans, whether of plains or Khas origin, occupied the single thread-wearing category — a category in which prevailed the customary Khas looseness with regard to endogamy. A second development was that the thread wearers, who intermarried among themselves (though always according to rules and results having reference to the species concept of pollution and purity) continued, as the earlier Khas assuredly had done, to intermarry with the Magars and other Tibeto-Burmans. It seems unlikely that plains Rajputs who needed political backing — recall that they were few in number and isolated — would rule out marital relations of political utility that already were part of the Khas configuration, especially when they could accept the more Sanskritized Khas elite as peers. Brahman acceptance of the pattern may be explained by the principle of *cuius regio eius religio*.

My hypothesis, then, is that the Malla Kingdom is an essential event in the historical development of Nepal's caste system. Heavy emphasis usually is placed on the relaxed moral order of the Tibeto-Burmans, as well as on the lowering of Brahman standards due to the exigencies of hill living. I do not deny these effects. I suggest, however, one must add to their operation, *at a critical historical juncture*, the existence of the Malla Kingdom and the Khas configuration of western Nepal.

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Maiti-Ghar: *The Dual Role of High Caste Women in Nepal*[1]

LYNN BENNETT

As in Hindu society throughout North India, Chetri-Brahman society of Nepal's Kathmandu Valley and surrounding hills views itself as male-dominated and its kinship system is strongly patrilineal. But, in choosing to study the dynamics of such a society with particular attention to the role of women — its "submerged" members — the inadequacy of any simple unidimensional model becomes evident. Instead, the radical difference between a woman's status in her consanguineal and affinal groups demonstrates that the structurally dominant patriline which groups agnatic males together and gives its affinal women extremely low status has almost a mirror image in the set of relations and obligations that these same males have toward their own consanguineal women.

This reverse image of the dominant patriline can be illuminated by comparison with Victor Turner's concept of *communitas,* the broader spiritual, often egalitarian values of a society which emerge in opposition to the "differentiated and often hierarchical system of politico-legal, and economic positions" which he calls *structure* (Turner 1969:96). In fact, Turner has himself noted that the patrilineal tie is "structural par excellence" linked as it is with "property, office, political allegiance, exclusiveness, and particularistic segmentary interests" (1969:114).

However, the concept of *communitas* needs considerable modification if it is to be applied to the Chetri-Brahman kinship system in Nepal. Turner seems to have arrived at his description of *communitas* mainly by studying life transition rites and the emergent phases of messianic cults.

[1] This article was written in 1973 after one year of fieldwork in a Brahman-Chetri village at the edge of the Kathmandu Valley. Since that time I have collected more material through subsequent field research and have reworked my analysis of women in Hindu society. The results of this work will appear as *Dangerous wives and sacred sisters: the social and symbolic roles of women among the Brahmans and Chetris of Nepal* (Columbia University Press, forthcoming).

The momentary and spontaneous nature of *communitas* which he emphasizes does not characterize the relationship between Nepali Hindu males and their consanguineal female relatives. The special sister/brother and father/daughter relations[2] are a permanent — though not dominant — part of society and in their own way as much of an institution as the patriline itself. There is not a single discrete group of cult members or initiates set temporarily apart from the rest of society. Every man who has a sister or daughter, every woman who has a brother or father participates in this reversal.

This brings up another variation from Turner's concept. He stresses the egalitarian nature of *communitas* in which all its members are undifferentiated by rank or status. But in the particular kinship relation under consideration here, rank and status are not abolished; they are reversed. Women do not become equal to men; they become higher. Hence the phenomenon we are discussing is not antistructure (which Turner equates with *communitas*) but rather, alternative structure — alternative to the dominant structure of the patriline and expressive of those broader spiritual and affectional values which characterize *communitas.*

In short, my difference with Turner is one of emphasis. For he, in originally setting out the valuable concept of *communitas,* stressed its separateness from the main structures of society, while my aim is to illustrate some of the values of *communitas* which have been institutionalized in certain important relationships *within* the structure of Hindu kinship itself.

In the discussion that follows I will refer to the literature on North Indian kinship as well as to my own field data from Nepal, since the same basic organizational principles apply to the many local variations throughout both regions. In Nepal and North India, Hindu kinship appears to be organized around two complementary sets of relationships, each based on different principles of ranking and reflecting different social values. The ranking principles which receive the most stress and are the most immediately apparent, are those which reflect the Hindu patrilineal ideal and the dominant values of "structure." According to these principles male ranks over female (of the same generation) and age ranks over youth. However, while these two principles order the relationships between agnatic males and between male and female affines, they do not hold between male and female consanguines. In this latter set of relationships we find that rank is determined by another set of principles which reflect the alternative values of *communitas*. Before

[2] The third major relationship between consanguineal males and females — that between mother and son — is beyond the scope of this article. It is of particular interest, however, because the affinal woman of one generation becomes the consanguineal woman of the next. In a sense one sees in the mother-son relation the synchronic reversal between *maiti* and *ghar* (which is described in this paper) enacted diachronically within the *ghar* itself.

turning to this second set of relationships we will first try to understand the dominant patrilineal ideal and the important relationships which are shaped by its values.

In Hinduism the patriline, linking the individual to his ancestors (*pitras*) and the ancient sages of the distant past, as well as to his own hopes of heaven and future rebirth through the ritual efforts of his descendants, is the epitome of continuity. In its meticulous performance of the arduous funeral rites and annual *śraddha* ceremonies for its deceased members, the patriline represents that part of Hinduism which seeks salvation through progeny and ritual. However, the other strain of Hindu thought which would follow the ascetic route of abstinence and self-control is also crucial to the ideology of the patriline. Campbell has suggested that the patrilineal ideal could best be represented by an unbroken series of celibate holy men such as is found in the mythological lineages of the North Indian *nath* cults (Campbell 1976:141). There, male offspring are produced by a series of miracles instead of by normal sexual intercourse, which is thought to drain away a man's precious life force and weaken his spiritual powers.

The patriline's concern for continuity and spiritual purity are both evident in the Nepali *bartamān*[3] ceremony where a boy receives his sacred thread (*janai*). Through the *bartamān* he achieves full caste status (*karma caleko*) with the obligation to observe henceforth all commensal rules and other caste regulations.[4] He also becomes eligible to take part in the annual sacrifice honoring the family *kul devtā* (lineage gods), thus becoming a full member of the lineage. The *bartamān* ceremony itself is a ritual observance of the *brahmachārya* or first stage in the traditional four stages of life. During the ritual the young boy must renounce family and lineage for the celibate religious life. His head must be shaved and, donning the yellow robes of the mendicant, he must beg rice from all his relatives (maternal as well as paternal) and prepare to wander out into the world. Having thus symbolically fulfilled the ascetic ideal, he can be called back by his family to assume the life of a householder and his eventual duties as husband and father.[5] Having established his spiritual purity he is fit to participate in the continuity of the patriline.

To begin to understand why male ranks over female in relationships structured by the patrilineal ideal, let us look at the different roles of sons and daughters born into a lineage. Ross (1961:143) quotes a revealing proverb: "The son is like the coconut palm; the daughter is like the monkey." Here the son is seen as an asset to the patriline. Like the

[3] (*Vratabhanda* in Sanskrit). Unless otherwise noted all italicized foreign words in this essay are Nepali.

[4] Such as avoiding untouchables and menstruating women and fasting on certain occasions such as *śraddhas*.

[5] In Nepal poor families who cannot have a separate *bartamān* combine the ceremony with the boy's wedding. The rite must be done before marriage can take place.

stationary coconut palm he is a source of wealth and continuity while the daughter, like the monkey who jumps from tree to tree, "steals" the family wealth and brings it to her husband's patriline. Hence the great joy and pride when a son is born and the considerably milder enthusiasm for a girl child.[6]

To a male the patriline in which he will find his main structural identity is the consanguineal group into which he was born. Since marriage is patrilocal, his principal roles as son, husband, and father are all enacted within the same family. Only a son may have the *bartamān* entitling him to sacrifice to the *kul devtā* as a full member of the lineage. It is the son who will receive his father's land and who is therefore expected to support his parents in their old age. Sons are the social security of the Hindu villager. As we have already mentioned, in Nepal the son's duties to his parents extend even beyond their deaths. He must, on pain of being expelled from lineage and caste, observe the lengthy funeral rites for them as well as their yearly *śraddha*s for as long as he lives. Daughters perform these rites only if there are no agnatic males left in the whole extended family.[7] This is called *santān khiīnu* (literally, the wearing away of the family or progeny), and is much dreaded by Nepalis for it means that the family lands will pass out of the lineage into the lineage of the surviving daughter's husband.[8] It also means that there will be no one to worship the family lineage gods and the sense of continuity with the past and future generations will be lost. Sons, then, are important not only because they themselves become members of the patriline, but also because they bring in brides and eventually produce the next generation.

Daughters, on the other hand, have an extremely ambiguous position with regard to the whole patrilineal institution. For although they can never become full members of their natal lineage, women are members to the extent that it is important in determining whom they may marry. At marriage, however, they must leave their natal patriline, family, and village and go to live with their husbands. Only then does a woman achieve her full religious and social identity. Only after marriage when she has assumed her husband's family name (*thar*) and *gotra,* does she attain the same full caste status which boys achieve at their *bartamān*.[9] In India and Nepal a woman is identified with her husband's patriline for the

[6] A common blessing given to young married women is "*Choro pahos*" [May you have a son]. To wish a daughter upon such a young woman would be considered not only odd, but unkind.

[7] And in such cases the *śraddha* rites are actually performed by the daughter's husband who belongs to another lineage and are carried out for only one generation instead of the usual three.

[8] Such a man who comes to live in his wife's parents' house and to inherit their land when they have no sons is called a *ghar juwāi.* He will be looked down on because he is considered to be his in-laws' servant. This is the reverse of the normal situation where the bride is the servant of *her* in-laws and the groom is greatly respected by his.

[9] In orthodox Nepali families the elders will not eat rice cooked by an unmarried daughter.

performance of her funeral rites and for the annual *śraddha* ceremonies that follow her death. The death of a daughter, whether she is married or unmarried, requires only a five-day period of fasting by her consanguineal group.[10] Her husband's family, on the other hand, must observe the full thirteen days of death pollution for her.

The transient nature of a daughter's stay in her natal home is everywhere emphasized in Hindu culture. Karve (1953:74) notes that one of the words for daughter in Sanskrit is *pradeya* [to be given away]. In Nepal one frequently hears a young daughter of four or five being laughingly teased or sometimes angrily scolded with the threat that her parents will hurry and marry her off to get rid of her. Hitchcock also, noting the leniency with which young girls were treated among the Rajputs of Khalapur, said that even before she is married "a girl is considered to be a guest in her own home" (1966:129).

What value, then, does a daughter have to her own consanguineal group? The answer touches again on the juxtaposed values of structure and *communitas* and has to do with the difference between the necessary and the gratuitous. By producing sons Hindu men and women perform their necessary duty toward the patriline by assuring its continuity as both a ritual and an economic unit. Daughters, on the other hand, are not structurally necessary to the patriline. They are in a sense extra, and have tended thus to become a focus for many of the affectional and wider spiritual values of *communitas.* Nepalis often say that their sons respect and obey them, but it is their daughters who really love them. Daughters also present the possibility of increasing one's personal religious merit and, on a more worldy plane, one's social status. As Dumont (1964:89) puts it, daughters "bring prestige by the generous way in which they are abandoned to others."

The underlying idea here is, of course, the *kanyadān,* or "gift of a maiden" which is the central ritual in orthodox Hindu marriage. A *dān* is a religious gift which brings *puṇya* or merit to its donor.[11] "*Dān*s should be given upwards to Brahmans and the purer and more valuable [the gift] the more merit [is gained]" (Campbell 1976:102). In North Indian folk songs about marriage the daughter is likened to "a sack of rice" and a

[10] In Nepal if a daughter is married only her male paternal cousins are affected by death pollution for five days; female paternal cousins are not affected.

[11] Dumont makes a slightly misleading distinction here between "spiritual merit" or *punya* obtained from an ordinary *dān* and "something similar, prestige or consideration which results [from *kanyadān*]" (1970:117). It is certainly true that the family gains from the upward marriage of a daughter, a very worldly satisfaction in the display of wealth and influence necessary to gain a superior bridegroom. But this worldly element is present in almost any *dān* and does not detract from its religious nature. Furthermore, the hypergamy is always understood as involving the superior *ritual* status of the bridegroom. If mere prestige were at stake, economic and political superiority would be an equally if not more important criterion. In sum the *kanyadān* seems to improve not merely the social, but also the karmic condition of the bride's parents.

"poor lowing cow" (Bhagwati 1952:160; Karve 1953:176), both of which are ritually pure gifts which can be given to Brahmans.

Furthermore, the fact that *dān*s, if they are to bring merit, must be given "upwards" to a person of higher ritual status, helps to explain the strong preference in North India for hypergamous marriage. In Nepal, among the Chetris where, as Fürer-Haimendorf has pointed out, there are no ranked clans, the marriage itself creates a ritual superiority of the groom's people — and hence a hypergamous situation — where there was formerly equality. This superiority of the groom's side is particularly evident among Nepali Brahmans who in addition to a fixed *jajmāni* type priest (*purohit*) attached to the family, also tend to call in their daughter's husband (*juwāi*) in the ritually superior role of *purohit*. Dumont has also noted this situational ranking of lineages in India. "Although hypergamy is actually in force only in a very few groups, the hypergamous stylization of wife takers as superior and wife givers as inferior pervades the whole culture" (Dumont 1966:101).

While sons of the family remain members of the consanguineal group, daughters become identified with the affinal group and its lineage. For it is there in her husband's house (*ghar*) that she will fulfill her most important structural roles as wife and mother. However this identification for a girl is neither immediate nor total. Usually she visits her natal home (*maiti*) frequently and maintains strong emotional and ritual ties with it. As Karve put it, "a woman's soul moves in two worlds" (1953: 79), and as we will see, the opposition between *maiti* and *ghar* — between consanguineal and affinal ties — plays throughout a woman's life. A woman's position in the kinship system is, therefore, an ambiguous one.

To the groom's family the bride is viewed as an "outsider," an affine who is somehow dangerous to agnatic solidarity. Obviously this suspicion about her is greatest in the first months and years after marriage before she has children and hence common interests with the patriline. It is at this stage that she may be held responsible for any misfortune that befalls her in-laws,[12] and her behavior will be most critically watched and controlled by them. Ritually this harsh scrutiny is exemplified by the customary viewing of the bride after she has been brought to her husband's house. All the village neighbor women come and pay a rupee or two for the privilege of looking at her face, which was covered during most of the wedding ceremonies. For that small price they buy license to minutely examine and criticize the bride, her features, and all the gifts sent with her by her parents. In Nepal I have heard brides called dark, small-eyed, and buck-toothed as they sat meekly with their eyes cast down. In one case the gifts (*gorḍhuwā*) the bride brought were thought to be meager and of

[12] Karve notes that such a bride who brought bad luck was called a *kula-ghni* [destroyer of the *kula* or lineage] in Sanskrit (1953:50).

poor quality so the groom's mother took back two of the saris that the groom's family had given to the bride during the wedding.

The concept of the bride as at once a dangerous intruder and a vitally needed source of progeny is expressed in many of her prescribed role relations with her in-laws. Toward her husband the wife really has two different roles. When they are alone she is expected to be attentive, subservient, and pleasing. A single verse from the eighteenth-century Nepali poet Bhanubhakta's work *Badhū Śiksā* (*Instructions for the bride*), gives the flavor of the ideal wifely attitude:

Let her go before the lord of her very breath, her husband,
And do what he commands.
If he asks for his tobacco to smoke,
Then she should fill the tobacco immediately.
Let her give him raisins, grapes, almonds, sweets,
Coconuts — whatever there is,
And let her come forward with a bowl of oil
So that she can anoint his feet with it.

(Verse 28)

The rationale for such an attitude is of course religious. Bhanubhakta tells the bride that she should "know her husband as god"[13] and that "there is no other *dharma* for a wife which is as great as that of serving her husband" (Verse 32). Women also know that their political position in the household depends a great deal on their husband.

As one distraught village daughter-in-law who felt her husband no longer cared for her said, "If the husband doesn't love you, no one in the household loves you." She went on to tell about a junior daughter-in-law in the family whose husband demonstrated his regard by buying and cooking meat for his wife to strengthen her after childbirth. "Now," she said, "even the mother-in-law is nice to her and doesn't ask her to do the hardest chores which she should do because she is junior. Instead I have to do them and my husband doesn't even notice."

In contrast to the fervent devotion which the wife is expected to feel, however, we should note the utter lack of emotion which she is expected to *show* when others are present. Over most of the North Indian plains she is expected to veil completely and refrain from speaking to her husband or showing any special attention toward him — such as serving his food. In Nepal these rules are more relaxed, and the wife may, as we have seen, hope for some subtle indirect indication of her husband's regard. But the pattern of avoidance in the early years prevails. There is an almost studied mutual ignoring between husband and wife when the young husband returns on holiday from his job in the town. Not a glance or a word is

[13] *Bhaktile pati Iswarai bujhun*, Verse 1.

exchanged between the two. The wife goes about her chores — perhaps even going out to cut grass on the hillsides to show her lack of concern — while the husband sits down with his father and mother to tell them of his affairs. Likewise, although many young husbands do secretly slip their wives some money for powder, ribbons, or bangles, they are expected to turn it all over to their father who will distribute it as he sees fit among the family.[14]

Madan (1965) in his study of Kashmiri Brahmans also notes this conspicuous lack of public interaction between husband and wife and he emphasizes its function in maintaining the harmony of the joint family.

> The growth of an exclusive loyalty between any two members of a household is disruptive to the ideal of joint family living. Since a daughter-in-law is a relative stranger, the development of such a loyalty between her and her husband is looked upon with particular disfavour (Madan 1965:134).

Certainly one can sense the in-laws' constant scrutiny and latent jealousy in this lament of a young bride quoted by Karve from the *Sāhitavadarpana*:

> The father-in-law feels insulted even if I take a deep breath; the co-wives smell out my very mind; the mother-in-law knows all my desires like an omniscient god and the sisters-in-law read every movement of my eyes. Under these circumstances, my accomplished beloved, you are uselessly tiring yourself when you use all your sweet arts to attract my attention and demand an answering gesture from me (Karve 1953:86).

Under these circumstances, we might add, the young husband is abnormally bold to attempt to attract the bride's attention in the first place.

Similar to the young bride's public behavior before her husband is her behavior toward her father-in-law (*sasura*) and her husband's elder brother (*jeṭhāju*) and, in fact, any elder males of the patriline. In many areas of North India she must veil before them and remain silent — or if conversation is necessary it must be carried on indirectly through children or other female members of the family. Ideally these men never see the daughter-in-law's face once they have chosen her as a bride. Here as in other areas, Nepal is more relaxed and full veiling is not practiced. However, a young daughter-in-law (*buhāri*) often pulls the end of her sari

[14] This minimizing of the husband/wife relation has as its corollary the playing down of the dependent son's fatherhood. In Nepal, for example, a dependent son's child is taught to call its father *dai* (elder brother) and its grandfather *ba* (father) as long as its grandfather is the head of the household. My observations indicate that the child tends to be played with and fondled more by the grandfather than by the father as long as the child's father is dependent. However, there is nothing in Nepal that suggests the almost total suppression of affection in the father/child relation which Carstairs has reported for the Rajputs of Rajasthan (Carstairs 1967:72).

up to cover her head in front of an elder affinal male and she is expected to do this always in front of her husband's elder brother. This latter seems to be the most restricted of all relationships, for a woman and her *jeṭhāju* may never touch each other even to exchange *tikā* at *Dasāi*. Instead of placing the *tikā* mark of red rice and curds on her forehead, the *jeṭhāju* simply sprinkles it over her without touching her.

Jacobson, in discussing the respect-avoidance relation between the daughter-in-law and the elder males of her conjugal household, stresses its function as a distancing technique in "situations of ambivalence, ambiguity and imminence of role conflict" (Jacobson 1970:485) — situations, in short, like the presence of a new daughter-in-law. We have already noted how respect-avoidance between husband and wife functions to minimize conflict between the roles of son and husband for the groom. It also serves to eliminate suspicion of sexual relations between the *buhāri* and her *sasura* or *jeṭhāju*, replacing ambiguity with strictly prescribed mutual behavior patterns. But respect-avoidance also protects the bride, who is apt to be overwhelmed and uncomfortable in the presence of so many critical strangers. In Nepal there is no actual veil to hide behind; but I have observed daughters-in-law whose blank faces, downcast eyes, and silence made them seem almost invisible. In sum, respect-avoidance behavior serves almost like a mutually protective membrane separating the new affine who has been taken into the agnatic corporate body. "It is a symbolic statement that she was — and to some extent still is, a member of another kin group" (Jacobson 1970:20). Only time and mutual offspring can wear away the barrier.

The one exception in the daughter-in-law's constricted relations with affinal men is her relation with her husband's younger brother (*devar*). With him she may have a more relaxed joking relationship and some emotional outlet in her husband's family. In one Nepali family I observed, there had been a quarrel and the daughter-in-law and her husband's family had not spoken to each other for a year (though they lived under the same roof). However, she still was friendly to her twelve-year-old *devar* and even invited him to vist her natal village. A woman's relation to her *devar* has the same affectional quality as her relation to her consanguineal family which will be discussed below.

However, the people with whom the bride interacts on a day-to-day basis are really the women of her affinal household — wives of her husband's brothers, her husband's unmarried sisters, co-wives perhaps, and above all, her mother-in-law (*sāsu*).

This latter *sāsu/buhāri* relationship is traditionally fraught with tension. In Nepal women are pleased when their son marries, for the bride is thought of as her mother-in-law's servant. It is expected that the bride will do all the hardest work — carrying manure, cutting grass, working in the fields, pounding rice, scrubbing pots. One incident was related to me

about a particularly bad-tempered mother-in-law who died a few years ago. She once got up at three in the morning and began husking grain on the foot mill. The *buhāri* (who knew it was her duty to awaken first and have a *mana* of grain pounded before her *sāsu* even got out of bed), hearing the sound of the foot mill, awoke in terror. She had no idea what time it was, but she knew her mother-in-law would scold her for being so lazy. In her frightened hurry to get downstairs, she slipped on the steep wooden ladder in the dark and badly hurt her back. She laughs as she tells this story now, but says her back still hurts sometimes from the fall and that this story shows the true, unreasonable nature of the *sāsu*s.

Bhanubhakta's work, which we quoted earlier, also describes the proper behavior of a bride toward her mother-in-law from early morning until night:

Let her go to her *sāsu*'s lotus feet and there,
fall at her feet,
And pray to her *sāsu* to tell her what service
she can perform.

(Verse 2)

When she has completed all her duties
let her rub her *sāsu*'s feet,
So that her *sāsu* becomes sleepy
And falls asleep easily.

(Verse 27)[15]

In traditional families even now, Nepali brides are expected to greet their *sāsu*s by touching their forehead to her feet. They must drink the water from washing their *sāsu*'s feet (*goṛa pāni khāne* — literally, to drink the foot water) before each meal, ask if they may wash her clothes and bedding, and rub oil on her feet at night. Often, however, after a daughter-in-law has a child, she may cease to drink her mother-in-law's *goṛa pāni* and her service may slacken a bit. This is the point, in fact, where tension begins to arise. For after the shy little bride has become the mother of one or two children — especially sons — her status has increased considerably and she may feel that the authority of the mother-in-law no longer has to be accepted without question. It is then that quarrels may erupt openly and the husband whose first loyalty is supposed to be to his mother and father, may be put to the test. The case history of a quarrel will illustrate some of the complex tensions involved.

The head of this family has two wives.[16] Because the younger wife is pretty and exceptionally bright, she is more favored and powerful in the

[15] Interestingly enough the bride is instructed to tend to her mother-in-law here *before* she goes to her husband to serve him as in the previously quoted verse 28.

[16] From my observation and census data it is clear that rural Chetri-Brahman society is openly polygamous. Recent government laws have banned polygamy, except under certain conditions such as the first wife's failure to produce living offspring during the first ten years of marriage. However, in several cases I know of the first wife, though unhappy about

household. However, the elder wife, in order to increase her prestige in the family, managed to talk her husband into bringing a bride for her son while the son was quite young. The daughter-in-law had a child, and subsequently quarreled with the younger wife, her junior mother-in-law. Ostensibly the argument was over a fight their respective children were having, but actually it arose out of the daughter-in-law's resentment that her junior mother-in-law did so little work. For five days the daughter-in-law locked herself in her room and would not eat or work. Then she took her child and went for a long stay in her natal village (*maiti*). During this time her husband and his mother, the senior mother-in-law, would not even speak to the others. In fact, the son did not return from his city job to visit his family on his holidays, but went instead to his wife's *maiti* (his *sasurali*) to visit her. Plans were afoot to move into town and set up house with his wife. This rebellion pained the father but he accepted it.

Then it was discovered that before the quarrel the daughter-in-law had stolen (with the aid of a young neighbor) Rs. 60 worth of grain from the family stores. I saw the son's visible horror when he heard the news. He said that he could not leave his father for one who stole his father's grain. When the daughter-in-law returned from her *maiti* the balance had swung and now even her husband and her senior mother-in-law, who had originally sided with her, would not speak to her.

This situation continued for several months with general village sentiment against the daughter-in-law because she had stolen and because she was proud and would not speak first to her junior mother-in-law. After about four months, however, her senior mother-in-law, who was basically sympathetic, began to speak to the daughter-in-law who in turn began to do conspicuous service for her mother-in-law. Soon the senior wife openly voiced her plan to ask her son to take his share of the land and move out (*binā basne*) with her and his wife. Apparently the senior wife had first tried to get her son to separate when he was only a boy of twelve. Family members said that at that time they persuaded her to wait until the boy was older and married. The plan failed again, however, because the son refused to leave his father, still publicly disowning his wife and apparently refusing to sleep with her. He even talked loudly of taking another wife, but other family members say that this was all feigned, because they heard the husband and wife "talking sweetly" at night.

Finally, after a ten-day visit to her *maiti* and nearly eleven months of silence, the daughter-in-law began speaking to her junior mother-in-law. Neither has really forgiven the other, but the daughter-in-law seemed to have realized that she could not influence her husband (even with the help of his own mother) to break with the family at this point.

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the second marriage, has not taken legal action. To do so would be to go against the customary view of the husband as lord over his wife and cause her to lose her standing in her husband's village.

Villagers who talk about the quarrel tend to be understanding about the daughter-in-law's original flare-up. Everyone knows what *sāsu*s are. Even her stubbornness in refusing to break her silence is accepted as common if not proper behavior. But they cannot forgive her disloyalty to her *ghar* [husband's house] in stealing grain from the family. The atypical factor in this case — the daughter-in-law defended against the rest of the family by her senior mother-in-law — is of course due to the prior underlying competition between the co-wives. No doubt also the situation was aggravated because the bride's junior mother-in-law (to whom she was expected to defer) was only a few years older than the bride herself. This made it hard for her to accept the rather haughty treatment she received from her father-in-law's favored younger wife. Above all this case illustrates the awkward position of the young husband and the kind of tension and suspicion (in this case justified by her theft of the grain) a new wife can arouse in her conjugal home.

We have thus far considered only those relationships where relative status is determined by the dominant "structural" values of the patriline. We have seen the male in his structural role in the agnatic group where he is dominant. And we have seen the female in her structural role in the affinal group where she is most definitely subordinate. But what about those relationships which express the values of *communitas*? We touched on these values briefly when we discussed the *kanyadān* and the daughter's special significance to her consanguineal group. For every lowly daughter-in-law and wife living in her *ghar* is also a beloved and respected daughter and sister when she goes home to her *maiti.* And every stern husband and father-in-law becomes the lenient and affectionate brother and father when the consanguineal women return.

In her *maiti* a Nepali woman's behavioral standards are to a large extent the reverse of what they are in her *ghar*.[17] A chori [daughter] visiting her *maiti* is given the lightest, most enjoyable of the household work — cooking, doing *puja* [worship], weaving straw mats, or looking after children. Here she may complain freely to sympathetic ears about the treatment she received from her *sāsu* or her *sauta* [co-wife].[18] She will be allowed to sleep when she feels tired during the day and she will be expected to avail herself of her mother's supply of hair oil, eye black, and even city-bought cream and powder to do her toilet. Special rich sweets and food will be prepared for her if the family can afford it and if possible,

[17] In the Jumla region of far western Nepal my observation has been that even the moral standards are reversed. In her *maiti* a married woman is allowed to go to all-night singing parties with eligible men from neighboring villages. Such behavior in her *ghar* would be a disgrace that would warrant at least a severe beating and perhaps even a divorce from her husband.

[18] It is interesting to note, however, that in the above case the daughter-in-law's own family, worried about her future with her husband's family, finally advised her to humble herself and break the silence with her junior mother-in-law.

they will try to send her back with a new blouse or even a sari. Women are expected to return from their *maiti* fatter, fairer, and generally more beautiful.

The same general pattern prevails over all of North India where even in areas of strict *purdah,* a woman in her natal home (Hindi: *maika*) does not veil herself and may move freely out of the house to visit fairs, local shrines, and friends' houses. The favored position of a woman in her *maiti* extends even to her ritual status there. The consanguineal woman has a kind of sacredness which is most clearly evident in North India in the brother-sister relation celebrated by the yearly festival of *Rakṣābandhan*. *Rakṣa* [protection] refers to the red or yellow thread which sisters tie around their brothers' wrists to wish them long life. It is a reciprocal bond, as one sister explained: "The *raksha* is a token that the sister gives to her brother to protect him. Then he is bound to protect her and give her money" (Cormack 1953:101). But the protection given by the sister is very different from that given by the brother. She enfolds the brother in an "auspiciousness" which is of a distinctly spiritual nature in return for his pledge of concrete physical and economic aid. It is, I believe, by virtue of her sacred or ritually superior status with respect to her brother that a sister has the power to protect him. For who else is thus empowered to tie *rakṣā*s on that day? The Brahman who is ritually superior to everyone. In fact, Lewis reports that in Rampur the "explanation of the custom is that Brahmans and girls are held equally sacred"[19] (Lewis 1958:208).

In Nepal the protective offices of Brahmans and sisters are celebrated at different times. Brahmans tie their protective threads at *Janai Purni.*[20] Then, some three months later during the *Tihār*[21] festival that thread can be removed (and tied to the tail of a cow), and in the *Bhai Tikā* ceremony the sister gives her blessing and protection to her brother. She must feed him special foods and place necklaces of long lasting *dubo* grass and purple *makmali* flowers around his neck "so that he will have a long life." But since it is considered a sin to receive a free gift from a sister (or a Brahman), the brother makes a generous gift of clothes, livestock, or money to her in return. Furthermore when the *tikā* marks are exchanged he must touch her feet while she merely gives *namaste* to him which indicates her superior status.

In the available literature on Hindu women, the sacred status of consanguineal women seems far more explicit and extensive in Nepal than it

[19] The brother, on the other hand, is in this festival likened to Rajput warriors setting out for battle to protect women (Cormack 1953:102) and Brahmans (Lewis 1958:208) from whom they have received *rakṣā*s. Dumont (1970) has pointed out what he sees as a uniquely Indian complementarity between the priestly Brahmans who held powers of religious legitimization and the royal Ksatriyas who held political powers. It is interesting to find this same complementarity being used to express and reinforce the brother-sister relation.

[20] Corresponding to the Indian *Raksābandhan* festival.

[21] Corresponding to the Indian *Dewali* festival.

is throughout North India. Fürer-Haimendorf, who first recorded the phenomenon, described it as *pujya* [worshipable] status (1966:44). Although I have not found that particular term in use,[22] this special relationship is for the most part as he described it. Essentially what we find is that a woman is, in certain ritual situations, sacred to her parents, brothers, and elder sisters. In other words the dominant ranking principles of male over female and age over youth which prevail in her *ghar*[23] are completely reversed when she visits her *maiti* at festival occasions throughout the year. Consanguineal males (of all ages) and elder consanguineal females must offer a ritual gift of money (*dakṣina*) and touch the feet of returning sisters and daughters (as well as of those still at home unmarried). Most important among those rituals which express the sacred status of consanguineal women is the *gora dhone* ceremony during a girl's wedding where all her aforementioned consanguineal relatives must worship her by washing her feet and giving her *gorḍhuwa* gifts.[24]

My observations differ from those of Fürer-Haimendorf who noted that the daughter's "sacred" status begins only at her marriage. Marriage, he writes, "transforms" a daughter's ritual relations with her natal family in that "the ties which henceforth link them . . . are based on the concept of *pujya*" (1966:44). No doubt the special status of a daughter is most forcefully expressed at her wedding by the *goṛa dhone* [feet washing]. But a daughter is imbued with this "sacredness" from infancy. I have repeatedly observed male household heads, elderly grandmothers, brothers, and older sisters touching the feet and giving dakṣina to tiny one-year-old girls.[25]

Yet Fürer-Haimendorf points us in the right direction, for it is the fact that she will *eventually* be given away and married out of her natal patriline that gives the consanguineal woman her sacredness. To understand this we must recall again the somewhat contradictory patrilineal values of continuity and ascetic purity which found expression in the idea of completely unilineal descent through a line of male saints. As Nur Yalman has pointed out with respect to caste affiliation, descent in Hindu kinship is emphatically *not* unilinear. "A single parent can never 'place'

[22] Instead Nepalis usually explain the relationship by saying: "*Chori ra didi-bahini lai mannu parcha*" [daughters and elder-younger sisters must be respected].

[23] There is some ambiguity about the daughter's status in her *maiti*. For although she is always treated with special indulgence and affection, in the nonritual situations of daily life she defers to her parents and elder brothers as her seniors. When pressed to explain this apparent inconsistency in the status of daughters one informant said that while a daughter must respect parents in household matters, she must be respected by all in the religious sphere. "*Kunai ghar ko behahār ma chori le bau lai manu paryo. Dhamic ma bau le chori lai manu paryo.*"

[24] The groom's feet are also washed at the same time by these relatives and this puts him under obligation to observe thirteen days of death pollution for them while the daughter herself observes five.

[25] After an unmarried girl reaches puberty there seems to be a certain embarrassment when male elders touch her feet and the act is often stopped with a gesture from the girl herself.

(or fix) the position of a child in the caste hierarchy independently: the child's position is always critically dependent upon the status of the other parent" (Yalman 1963:40). The very concept of caste endogamy implies at least some degree of bilateral descent. What this means for the Nepali Hindu case is that although a child may receive his special lineage name and even his general caste rank from his father, his mother's natal lineage — in a sense her "pedigree" of caste purity — affects his position within the caste. In fact, sometimes, where the woman's caste status is appreciably lower, his mother determines the child's caste altogether.[26]

Specifically, among Nepali Chetris in accordance with the general acceptance of hypergamy, a man may have either Chetri, *Bhote*,[27] or Newari wives whose offspring qualify as Chetris and take their father's lineage name. But only children born of the former are considered pure or *jharrā* Chetris from whom other *jharrā* Chetris will take the ritually relevant foods (rice and *dāl*) and who are eligible to enter the inner sanctum of the shrine during the annual sacrifice to the lineage gods (Bista 1972:123). Children of *Bhote* women (or of Chetri widows or divorcees) married to a Chetri man are called *thimā* (*thimahā* = crossbred or hybrid) and are accorded an inferior ritual status within the caste. A *thimā* boy will usually not be given a six-thread *janai* at his *bartamān*, but a three-thread one instead. Moreover, traditionally a *thimā* son was entitled to only one sixth the share in his father's land that a *jharrā* son would inherit.

All this supports Yalman's contention (1963) that the extraordinary preoccupation with female purity throughout Hindu culture is, on the sociological level, related to a woman's importance in establishing the caste status of her offspring. "It is mainly through the women of the group that blood and purity is perpetuated" (Yalman 1963:43). He claims this directly only for the South Indian and Ceylonese situation. However, if certain features of North Indian kinship are taken into account, Yalman's important insights can be applied in a pan-Hindu context. Specifically, the marriage rules of the South permit the transformation of certain consanguineal relations into the affinal category, while in North India these two categories remain separate and mutually exclusive. The strength of this separation between affinal and consanguineal relations seems in turn to be closely related to the emphasis placed on *transfer* of consanguineal women out of their natal lineage through marriage. In the

[26] In cases where a Brahman man marries a Chetri woman or where a Chetri (or Brahman) man marries an untouchable woman, the child belongs entirely to the mother's caste. In the former situation, which is acceptable and quite common, the child still takes his father's *thar* and *gotra* and may even continue to worship (though not as *pujari*) the Brahman lineage god But in the latter case not only the child, but the father as well if he continues to live with the woman, will become an untouchable and be expelled from the lineage *kul devtā* cult.

[27] *Bhote* is a term used by Chetris and Brahmans to describe tribal groups such as Tamangs, Gurungs, and Sherpas, all of whom fall into the middle ranking, clean or *matwali* (liquor-drinking) castes from whose hands water can be accepted.

South the transfer enacted is not a radical one because of the preferential cross-cousin marriage where "those who marry are already closely related and expected to marry" (Yalman 1963:27). In describing the Sinhalese ideas of kinship and caste identity Yalman says: "The kindred is analogous to a small caste community. And it is part of this idea that marriage take place within it. . . . There is a preference to make the kindred a closed circle and to preserve land, women and ritual quality within it" (1963:27).

In North India there is no comparable parallel between caste and the kindred or consanguineal group. Taking women from within the consanguineal group on the model of caste endogamy is strictly forbidden in the North. The Chetris of Nepal regard marriage with the mother's brother's daughter as *pātak* (incest) equivalent with marriage to one's own sister or daughter.[28] As Dumont puts it, "people of the North marry at a greater distance spatially as well as structurally" (1966:90). Moreover, Dumont sees two different interpretations of the principle of caste endogamy in the marriage patterns of the North and South. In the South the ideal marriage is what he calls *isogamy* — marriage between partners of scrupulously equal status. This pattern tends to "proliferate small endogamous units" resembling castes or subcastes as exemplified by the Sinhalese ideal of kindred given above (Dumont 1966:116). Ideal marriage in the North, however, as we have seen, is *hypergamous*. And since there is no insistence on finding spouses of equal status this pattern allows for much larger endogamous units which are in no way coextensive with the consanguineal group.

Marriage in North India means a much more radical transfer of women. It means that daughters are sent *out* to strangers and brides are accepted *in* as strangers.[29] There is no merging of the categories of affinal and consanguineal relatives such as one finds in the kinship terminology of the South; the maternal uncle, known since childhood, does not become the father-in-law; the sister's daughter does not become the son's bride. As we have already learned from the Nepali data, the distinction between affinal and consanguineal women is maintained with particular force.

In Yalman's analysis of female purity no mention is made of the strikingly different status of brides and daughters, perhaps because in the South, which is the observational core of his essay, the differences are not so pronounced. But in the North the opposition between affinal and consanguineal women seems to be clearly related to the way in which the concern about female purity is articulated. It is women in their sexual

[28] Interestingly the Thakuri caste which ranks just below Brahmans and above Chetris does permit matrilateral cross-cousin marriage.

[29] Strangers in the sense that (in Nepal at least) the girl should come from another village and *must* be of another lineage. Of course care is taken to ascertain the caste purity and reputation of the prospective groom's family and a family with a reputation of undue harshness toward its daughters-in-law may find it difficult to find brides.

procreative roles that present a danger to the blood and purity of the group, and in the Northern kinship system that means exclusively *affinal* women. Hence the bride, so strongly identified with her procreative role, must be protected by the strictest social and ritual means in her *ghar*. The daughter, on the other hand, is categorically shielded from any association with sexual roles and is consequently free to enjoy in her *maiti* the removal of all the harsh restrictions of her *ghar*. Her consanguineal group can afford to treat her with leniency for she is not a structural member of their patriline. Once married her purity is not their concern; it has been established by her acceptance into the high status affinal family. In other words the daughter and the sister can be "sacred" to her consanguineal kin *only because she is not "wife" to them.*

This would not be so for the Sinhalese case mentioned earlier. It is reasonable in such a "closed circle of kindred" that even a married consanguineal woman might be seen as threatening to the future caste purity of her own natal group, for the lineage into which she has married is related through the female line and her own children are eligible to marry back into their mother's natal lineage.

There is of course great concern in the North about the purity of consanguineal women who have not yet been transferred to another patriline. For a girl must be pure in order to be given away as a religious gift and until her marriage her actions reflect directly upon the prestige of her natal family. If she disgraces them by becoming pregnant they must expel her — or even kill her — to save their own caste standing (Freed 1967:305). In Nepal if an unmarried Chetri or Brahman girl becomes pregnant, there is great concern to disclose the caste status of the lover, since this will determine the future status of the girl and her child. If the gentle questioning of the girl's own family does not succeed, she is subjected to the harsh interrogation of a gathering of male lineage members. Even if the lover was a Chetri or Brahman the girl's chances of marriage almost disappear.[30] But if the girl will still not identify the lover, then they must assume the worst — that the lover was an untouchable. On the eleventh day after birth when no father can be produced to give his *gotra* and *thar* to the child in the naming ceremony, both the child and the mother become untouchable.[31] From then on the girl may not enter her father's house and must fend for herself.[32]

[30] In one such case where the lover was determined to be a Chetri, the girl's family managed to marry her off to an Indian in the distant Terai where the fairness of hill women cancels many other defects. She is only now, with great shame, accepted back into her parents' house after a period of six years absence.

[31] Often such children are abandoned before this ceremony. If the child's umbilical cord is uncut when it is found, it will assume the caste of whoever finds it and claims it by cutting the cord.

[32] In cases where the family can afford it they try to send such a disgraced daughter away to learn some skill like nursing or factory work so she can support herself.

Up until the last generation such disgrace was guarded against in Nepal by the preference for prepuberty marriage. Most of the first marriages of men over forty in the village were to girls of eleven or thirteen (twelve being inauspicious). Even now traditional Brahman families prefer a bride that has not yet menstruated.

Yalman has analyzed the traditional Brahman ideal of prepuberty marriage as the structural equivalent of the female puberty rites so conspicuous in the South. Both are concerned with safeguarding the purity of the girl by attaching her nascent sexuality to "clean, pure, appropriate men, or at least to objects symbolising the ritual purity of the male principle" (Yalman 1963:48).

However, the emphasis that we have found on distinguishing consanguineal and affinal women in Northern Hinduism suggests that some refinement of Yalman's analysis of female purity may be necessary. For in Yalman's analysis the concern with female purity is primarily with regard to women's structural procreative role — in other words it is from the point of view of the affinal group. He tends to see both the marriage and puberty rites positively in terms of *attaching* women to proper (pure) men for sexual purposes. But no matter how "pure" a bride may be either in terms of her own virginity or her caste pedigree, she still cannot have the ideal, categorical purity which in the North a daughter has from the point of view of her consanguineal kin and which makes her sacred to them. For in the sexual role a woman can only be relatively pure since, as Yalman himself notes (1963:44), in the Hindu view sexuality is itself polluting.

Hence the same marriage and female puberty rituals when viewed from the standpoint of the woman's consanguineal group can be seen as expressing the group's *separation* of itself from her sexuality. This theme appears clearly in the *gupha basne* rite of female puberty among the Chetris and Brahmans of Nepal. *Gupha basne* means literally "staying in a cave" and entails the young girl staying in a darkened room for between twelve and twenty-one days[33] after the onset of her first menstrual period. During this period she may not see any man, but above all she must avoid the faces of consanguineal males.[34] Furthermore, she must not see the sun or the roof of her natal home. To ensure this, especially if the girl is unmarried and still living at home, she is taken away (through the woods so she will not meet any men) sometimes to another village altogether.[35]

[33] Depending on the orthodoxy of the family.

[34] "*Daju-bhai ko mukh hernu hundena*" means "It is forbidden to see the faces of one's brothers." *Daju-bhai* means literally, elder and younger brother, but is used to refer to consanguineal males in general.

[35] In one case I have observed of a *gupha basne* after marriage, the seclusion lasted only four days and was done in her husband's family's own animal shed. There was some criticism of this laxness, but the general feeling was that since she was married the strictness of the ritual was not so important.

There she stays usually in the windowless loft above the animal shed. For the first four days she may not eat either rice, salt, or oil and she may go outside to relieve herself only at night. On the fourth night she may bathe and change her clothes and resume eating normal food. But it is only on the morning of the twelfth (or twenty-first) day after bathing in the dark before sunrise and putting on new clothes, that the girl can come out into the light and be seen. Even if she is married the clothes must be sent by her consanguineal male relatives and must include a blouse, a sari, waistcloth and *saubhagghe.*[36] When the girl arrives home[37] a Brahman is called to do *godān* or the "gift of the cow." Only wealthy families can actually give a cow. Most give money to the Brahman who first offers water to the cow and sprinkles some on the girl to purify her so she can reenter the family's house.[38]

Besides protecting the girl's new sexuality in a general way from all men, this ritual specifically hides that aspect of her from her consanguineal male relatives (*daju-bhai*). This interpretation is reinforced by the fact that for the first eleven days after a woman has given birth, before the naming ceremony where the child's father claims him as a member of his lineage, neither the woman nor her child may be seen by her consanguineal male relatives. Other men may see her, but not her *daju-bhai.* This period of seclusion is likened by the Nepalis themselves to the *gupha basne* period, and would once again seem to shield the woman's sexuality from the men of her *maiti.* Furthermore I think the association of the girl with the cow at the conclusion of the *gupha basne* rite not only emphasizes her purity (Yalman 1963:43), but also her status as a future *dān* to be given away as *kanyadān,* the way the cow is given in *godān.*

Once again we return to the daughter's role as a religious gift to be given away and her "gratuitous" status within her natal patriline. Because she is not to be possessed or used sexually by them for the patrilineal goal of continuity, she presents the perfect vehicle for the patriline's other somewhat paradoxical values of chastity and absolute spiritual purity. We began by saying that the woman's relation to the patriline is an ambiguous one and that her reversed roles in *ghar* and *maiti* reflected the alternating and juxtaposed values of structure and *communitas.* It now becomes clear that woman's ambiguous position in the kinship system also runs parallel to the general Hindu ambivalence toward sexuality and procreation.

[36] *Saubhagghe* (Sanskrit *Saubagya*). Literally the word means "in possession of a living husband" and by extension, "happiness, good-fortune and prosperity" (Turner's Dictionary). But the word is also used to refer to the articles women wear as a sign of being married with a living husband. It includes red bangles, red *dago* [false braid made of thread], a mirror, comb, red *sindor* for the parting of the hair, and a necklace of red beads. All but the last two may be freely worn by unmarried girls, but *sindor* and beads can be given by a husband only so they are not sent to a girl at the end of *gupha basne* unless she is married.

[37] This will be her husband's home if she is married, her parents' if she is not.

[38] The ritual must be repeated for a period of seven days following the girl's second and third menses.

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Dhikurs: *Rotating Credit Associations in Nepal*

DONALD A. MESSERSCHMIDT

Cooperation in socioeconomic endeavors is a major theme among the Tibeto-Burman and Tibetan-speaking peoples of Himalayan South Asia and Tibet. Membership in indigenous cooperative and mutual aid societies is traditionally founded on ties of real kinship, fictive kinship, or nonkinship. This paper deals with the *Dhikur* of Nepal. A *Dhikur* is a type of nonkin rotating credit association formed among friends and acquaintances who have similar financial needs and interests.

Several writers have described various systems of noncredit, nonkin mutual aid systems found in the Himalaya[1] but, except for brief references by Bista (1967) and Pignède (1966), the *Dhikur* has been virtually ignored. This is due partly to the relative infancy of research in Nepal and partly to restrictions on travel in the Tibetan border regions where *Dhikurs* are found. Recently, certain of these restrictions have been relaxed and I was able to visit the previously "closed" region of Tingaun in Manang District. I have reported briefly on the *Dhikur* associations of Tingaun in an earlier article (Messerschmidt 1972). Since then I have gathered comparative data on *Dhikurs* among the Gurungs of the lower hills, and the Thakalis, Panchgaunles, and Bhotias of the mountains. The following, then, is the first detailed and comparative description of the *Dhikur* system. Emphasis is on its organizational and functional aspects.

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[1] Among them is Gorer's account (1968) of the lepcha *ingzong*, Miller's (1956) of Tibetan *ganye* and *kidu*, and Pignède's (1966) of Gurung agricultural cooperatives called *nogar*. See also Nepali (1965) on Newari *guthi* organizations, Okada (1957) on Nepalese *mit*, and Messerschmidt (1976), on a *kidu*-like association among Tibetan refugees in the United States. Some of these are strikingly similar to the *Dhikur* in form and structure.

DEFINITIONS

A *Dhikur* is a rotating credit association of shareholders who pay regular installments at a predetermined rate and frequency and who each receive the combined installments (the fund) once. This is the share, to invest or spend as one wishes. Installments are the same for every shareholder in a particular turn, but increase each time by a type of simple incremental interest. In effect, each shareholder pays interest for the privilege of using the fund. Some *Dhikurs* require each shareholder to contract a guarantor for security, and all *Dhikurs* have certain basic rules of conduct. A *Dhikur* association terminates when the last shareholder takes the fund. Except for the first turn in which the fund is always given to the founder, the fund-taker in all other turns is determined in one of several ways: by need, drawing lots, bidding, or casting dice. Other variations relative to auxiliary funds and the payment of interest are discussed below under the appropriate headings.

There are three kinds of *Dhikur:* monetary, grain, and livestock. Unless otherwise specified, all *Dhikurs* discussed in this paper are monetary.

As an example consider the following small, hypothetical, but not atypical *Dhikur*. There are eleven members, 100 rupees initial installments with Rs. 10 per 100 per annum increments, and annual rotation. At the first meeting (round one) ten shareholders contribute Rs. 100 each, providing the first fund-taker with Rs. 1,000. At the second meeting (after one year) the first fund-taker with nine other shareholders each contribute Rs. 100 plus the first increment of Rs. 10, providing the second fund-taker with the *Dhikur* fund totaling Rs. 1,100. In round three (after two years) the installments are increased by an additional increment of Rs. 10 each, bringing each contributor's installment to Rs. 120 and the total fund to Rs. 1,200; in round four to Rs. 1,300, etc. After ten years the last (eleventh) fund-taker receives a fund totaling Rs. 2,000 and the *Dhikur* is finished.

In the example above, rotation is annual, but biannual *Dhikurs* are more common,[2] they provide faster access to the fund and keep *Dhikurs* with many shareholders from becoming extremely drawn out.

Members whose turns fall toward the end have a progressively better financial advantage. They receive more than they pay, offsetting the disadvantage of having to wait so long for capital to invest. The first few fund-takers pay more than they receive; their advantage is early access to the fund. The first fund-takers are essentially borrowers, and the last are lenders.

2 The majority of *Dhikurs* investigated (both monetary and grain) rotate biannually.

Before continuing, certain basic terms and concepts need clarification:

MEMBER — any person belonging to a *Dhikur* association. A member usually means the same thing as a shareholder. Sometimes several members form a partnership, and each takes an equal portion of the fund in his turn. Occasionally one member takes two shares.

SHAREHOLDER — the unit which pays an installment at each rotation of the fund (except in its own turn when it takes the fund). The shareholder may be either one individual or a partnership. Holding a share (*bhaag*, Nepali)[3] in the association involves the responsibility of paying the prescribed installments regularly, and the privilege of taking the fund once.

FUND-TAKER — the particular shareholder who takes the fund in one turn.

FUND, OR *DHIKUR* FUND — the sum total of installments (with increments) paid in one turn by all shareholders (except the one which takes the fund that time). The fund is sometimes called *Dhuku Ti* [treasury] in Nepali.

INSTALLMENT — the basic contribution plus the total of the increments given to the association in any particular turn by each shareholder. The amounts of the initial installment and increments are fixed by mutual agreement at the beginning.

INCREMENT — simple interest which increases by addition. The rate of interest (*byaaj*, Nepali) is normally stated as a specific amount per 100 rupees per annum. Increments are paid starting in the second round.

[3] All italicized non-English terms (except Tibetan) found in the text are transliterated from the Nagri script after the system used by the Summer Institute of Linguistics in Nepal (Hari 1971). This is the simplest and most convenient form for typewriting. Note that Nagri is very nearly a phonemic representation of the spoken language. Terms from Tibeto-Burman dialects (Thakali, Gurung) have been spelled and transliterated from Nagri according to the system devised by Glover (1971). Place names are spelled (sometimes incorrectly) according to published convention. Definitions of Nepali words are adapted from Turner (1965), and Tibetan from Jäschke (1958).

To aid the reader in pronunciation of terms, here are the capitalized consonants in Roman (and Nagri) script as compared with related symbols in lower case:

D (ड) and *T* (ट) = voiced unaspirated retroflex stops
d (द) and *t* (त) = voiceless unaspirated dental stops
Dh (ढ) and *Th* (ठ) = voiced aspirated retroflex stops
dh (ध) and *th* (थ) = voiceless aspirated dental stops.

All other consonants are typed in lower case form. See Hari (1971) for the complete orthography. Long vowels are typed double (*aa, ii, uu*) and short vowels, single. Nasal vowels are rendered *ã, ãã, õ*, etc.

ORGANIZATION AND FUNCTION OF *DHIKURS*[4]

Membership

SIZE. A *Dhikur* is usually composed of from ten to thirty members, although I have documented one *Dhikur* of sixty-three members and another of 105. Contemporary Thakali monetary *Dhikurs* are consistently the largest in terms of membership, number of shares, and size of funds. In Dhikurs of exceptionally large membership, partnerships are common. For example the largest Thakali *Dhikur* has 105 members, five partners to each of the twenty-one shares; in the one of sixty-three members there are three partners to each of twenty-one shares (Appendix 1: D and E). In these cases the partners are equally responsible for their whole installments and share equally the capital in their fund. Gurung *Dhikurs* are generally much smaller, with ten or fifteen members and only occasional partnerships (Appendix 1: F and G; see also 1: C). Women's and children's *Dhikurs* are smallest. Grain *Dhikurs* are also small (Appendix 1: H).

SEX AND AGE. There are normally no membership restrictions by sex, but men predominate. Women may join, providing they have the necessary financial means or are sponsored by an adult male relative. Social and economic responsibility are criteria which tend to limit membership to adults, but participation by young people is not ruled out; a father may sponsor his child, or an elder brother his younger sibling.

ETHNIC GROUP. Membership is usually confined to the dominant ethnic group in a locality, to men who know each other well and are considered mutually trustworthy. There are exceptions: Tingaun *Dhikurs* include both Bhotias and Gurungs, and some Thakali *Dhikurs* include Panchgaunles, Baragaun Bhotias, and a few locally resident Tibetans. Thakali *Dhikurs* also occasionally include Gurung and Newar members, but these are few (Appendix 1: A and B, D, E, and F).

In the border regions, civil servants posted to district offices and check-posts take little interest in local socioeconomic affairs. The same is true of nonlocal school teachers in the lower hill Gurung villages. Most of these people are men of the Brahman and Chhetri castes with no comparable traditions and with their own commitments and responsibilities back home. Besides, they are seldom posted in one place long enough to fulfill a *Dhikur* commitment.

[4] Except for minor variations, the format in this section follows the general outline presented by Ardener (1964).

FINANCIAL. Financial means is the dominant criterion. This usually precludes participation by the poorer occupational caste people resident in most villages. In the past, sustained local residence was important, but the criterion is being relaxed as the society becomes more mobile. Some Thakali *Dhikurs* for example, have members who live as far apart as Thak Khola, Pokhara, Kathmandu, and the Terai. The same trend of dispersed membership is true to a much lesser extent in regards to Nyeshang, Tingaun, and Gurung village *Dhikurs*. In every case a meeting place is chosen in advance and all members or their appointed representatives are required to attend at the designated place and time.

RECRUITMENT. The person who initiates the formation of a *Dhikur* usually invites friends or acquaintances to join. Sometimes he invites members to drink liquor or beer with him; acceptance of the drink means that person will join. If a large membership is anticipated, two or three persons may undertake to recruit members. These founders are then given the first turns with the fund (see Order of Rotation, below).

Roles and Duties

Every *Dhikur* has an administrator, usually a fellow member of prestige and known abilities. His duties are to keep records and to call and oversee meetings. Gurungs call him *Dhikur aama* ([mother] in Nepali), *komandar* [commander], or *tsiba* ([chief] in Gurung). Thakalis and Bhotias call him *gopa* ([headman] from Tibetan *'go-pa*).[5] Very recently, the more sophisticated Thakalis have revised the administration of their large *Dhikurs* by adding a chairman called *aktiyaare* ("one in authority," in Nepali), reducing the role of *gopa* to a secretary-treasurer, and changing the *gopa*'s title to *sachib* ("minister," in Nepali).

Most *Dhikurs* involve a special category of person called *jamaani* ([security] in Nepali) or *dhan-jamaani* [money-security i.e. guarantor]. Except in small and intimate *Dhikurs* a guarantor (sometimes two) is required for each shareholder or member. The guarantor is financially liable in case his client defaults; both parties sign a written contract to that effect (Appendix 3). The *jamaani* may or may not be a fellow *Dhikur* member, but he must be accepted by the others as a man of recognized means and responsibility. In the big Thakali *Dhikurs* the chairman and secretary-treasurer usually cannot be guarantors for others (see the rule in Appendix 2, Clause 22). In Ghan Pokhara *Dhikurs* the prestige of the administrator and his ability to enforce sanctions is considered security enough; no *jamaani* is required. In Nyeshang only the first fund-taker is

[5] The term *gopa* is also used in Ghan Pokhara Gurung *Dhikurs*, probably borrowed directly from Thakali.

required to have a *jamaani*. Informants explain that this is because the man who requests a *Dhikur* may be a very poor person who cannot always be trusted to live up to his responsibility after taking the fund.

Dhikur members are called by various terms meaning "brothers," "friends," or "players." Except in the roles of administrators or guarantors, members act identically vis-à-vis the association.

Contracts, Rules, and Sanctions

A *Dhikur* member usually signs at least two contracts: (1) a constitution and bylaws, and (2) a statement of security (Appendices 2 and 3). The constitution and bylaws are drawn up and agreed upon by all members at the start of a *Dhikur*. It may be as detailed and formal as that of "The Honorable Benevolent Dhaulagiri *Dhikur*" with a preamble and twenty-five clauses (Appendix 2), or as simple as this statement from a Ghan Pokhara Gurung *Dhikur*:

> It is written, we 11 people together are doing a *Dhikur*. This *Dhikur* begins from 15 Pus 2023 [1 January 1966] and expires on 15 Pus 2033 [1976]. Altogether one installment is Rs. 100.[6] The *Dhikur* brothers' names and turns are written below.

Most modern Thakali *Dhikurs* are patterned after the large and important "Thak-Sat-Sae Social *Dhikur*" (Appendix 1: E). In simple *Dhikurs* the rules of conduct are well understood and seldom written.

Informants maintain that it is rare that a person defaults in his payment.[7] It is obvious, however, that as *Dhikurs* increase in size and as individuals are drawn into more and more *Dhikurs* contemporaneously, the sanctions become more formalized. Some wealthy Thakalis belong to as many as ten or twelve *Dhikurs* at once.

There is no requirement that securities are to be deposited; a signed statement of security is enough. If the organizers have serious doubts about the integrity or financial status of one of the members, they may prevail on him to volunteer to take the last turn. The feeling is that if a member is likely to default, the temptation would be greater immediately after taking the fund. By taking the last and largest fund there is every incentive to live up to the obligations all along the way.

In cases of late payment of the installment a late-payment fee is charged. A verbal or printed notification of the time, date, and place of each meeting and the amount of each installment is given to all members

6 An interest rate of Rs. 10 per 100 per annum is understood.

7 I was told of only one case of outright default where a *Dhikur* member fled the region (Tingaun) and left his guarantor to pay his obligations to the association. The guarantor subsequently confiscated the defaulter's house and fields, holding them against the unlikely day when he would return. Should he return, the guarantor would demand compensation with interest.

by the administrator. A member is expected to send a representative or make prior arrangements with the secretary-treasurer if he is unable to attend. In special cases, such as extreme hardship or some unforeseen catastrophe, a member may appeal to the administrator or the entire membership for more time in paying his debt. In some large *Dhikurs* all members are required to take a receipt when paying their installments as insurance against false claims.

When a member cannot continue his participation in a *Dhikur* for whatever reason, there are two options. In cases of outright default his guarantor is financially liable. But in most cases the member (or if deceased, his representative) would seek first to transfer his membership to an agreeable close relative in consultation with the fellow *Dhikur* members and his guarantor. The relative is usually a wife, son, or brother and is called the *hakaDhaar* ([one who has a claim of right] in Nepali). Except in Nyeshang, where a shareholder may apparently sell his *Dhikur* membership at will, transfer of membership is extremely rare.

Dhikurs are not mentioned in Nepal's Civil Code (*muluki ain*). They are considered to be ethnic group organizations and are not required to be registered with any legal authority. Never in the memory of my informants has a *Dhikur* dispute been taken to court, but the existence of signed and witnessed contracts seems to indicate that should a serious dispute arise recourse to legal action might be tried. There are no religious sanctions and no apparent objection to *Dhikurs* from any quarter of society.

Order of Rotation

The order of rotation of turns is decided in each association in one of four ways: by need, lot, casting dice, or bid. Taking turns by immediate need is usual in small *Dhikurs*; members discuss the urgency of their needs at each meeting and decide by consensus who takes that turn with the fund. Drawing lots (*golaa halne* in Nepali) is quite common. Casting dice is a predilection among some Bhotias who are ardent gamblers. And a system of bidding for each turn is maintained in Thakali *Dhikurs* where an auxiliary *shigu* fund is present.

The first turn with the funds goes to the founder of the *Dhikur*. In cases where several organizers recruit members, the organizers are awarded the turns according to the number of persons each has recruited. The most successful recruiter takes the first turn, the next, the second turn, etc. In Tingaun, where turns are usually decided by drawing lots, a person may request second place, in which case he is required to deposit a sum of money in an auxiliary refreshment fund called *shu-de* (Appendix 1: A and

B). (The *shigu* and *shu-de* systems are described below under Auxiliary Funds.)

Installments

Initial installments vary in amount from half a rupee in children's *Dhikurs* to Rs. 500 or more in large adult *Dhikurs*. The two largest Thakali *Dhikurs* on record have initial installments of Rs. 1,000 and Rs. 2,500 per shareholder. The largest Tingaun *Dhikur* has an initial installment of Rs. 500.

Installments are paid at the time of each rotation of the fund. Meetings are held and payments made at the house of one designated member, usually the administrator. Meetings are usually scheduled for the first or fifteenth of a month, dates easily remembered.

Interest

Interest (*byaaj* in Nepali) is simple and rises by added increments of a predetermined amount per 100 rupees per annum. Nepalis say, for example, that a certain *byaaj* is "ten per hundred per year" (*barsha ko saykoTaa das*). (Biannual increments, then, would amount to Rs. 5 per 100 in each turn.)

Everywhere but in Tingaun, *byaaj* is Rs. 10 per 100 per annum, the same as the government prescribed rate for moneylending. In Tingaun I have recorded *byaaj* as high as Rs. 14 and 16 per 100 per annum.

Interest on grain *Dhikurs* varies greatly. I have recorded *byaaj* on a barley *Dhikur* as high as five *paathi* per *muri* per annum (a ratio of one to four) and on a rice *Dhikur* as low as one *paathi* per *muri* per annum (one to twenty).[8] (Appendix 1: H.)

The only livestock *Dhikurs* reported are goat *Dhikurs* in Baragaun. For example, one with twenty-five shareholders rotates biannually and increases by one goat per turn.

Traditionally, every shareholder pays equally and regularly a basic installment with interest at each turn before and after his own turn with the fund. But the Thakalis have recently introduced an innovative change in this system in what they call "the new style Thakali *Dhikur*." In it, each shareholder begins paying interest only *after* he has taken his turn with the fund. As before, one whose turn falls towards the end stands to gain progressively more in relation to his total investment in the *Dhikur*.

[8] The usual measure of volume for grain is the Nepali *muri*. One *muri* has 20 *paathi*. The approximate equivalent of one *muri* of wheat, barley, or millet is 67.3 kg.; of husked rice, 68.6 kg.; and of paddy (unhusked rice), 50 kg.

Under the new system he gains even more. For example, under the old system (which is still the most popular), if there are eleven shareholders making Rs. 100 installments with Rs. 10 per 100 per annum interest, and biannual rotation, then the last fund-taker pays Rs. 1,000 plus Rs. 150 interest over five years, a total of Rs. 1,150. He receives in his turn a fund of Rs. 1,500 for a gain of Rs. 350. Under the new system the last fund-taker would pay no interest whatsoever and his gain is Rs. 500. (See Appendix 1: E for another example.)

There is another related variation called *kista-bandi* (*kista* [installment] in Nepali; *-bandi* [portion] a Hindi loan suffix). Here the founder takes the first turn as usual but thereafter he only pays his installments without interest; all other shareholders pay the regular installments with interest as usual. The *kista-bandi Dhikurs* are popular in Baragaun.

Dhikur *Funds*

SIZE. The amount of installments and the size of the fund are decided by all members at the organizational meeting. The founder usually voices his particular need, but the desires and abilities of all members are considered and the amount may be raised or lowered accordingly. When a final decision is reached, it is entered into the constitution and bylaws.

Smaller *Dhikurs* are more common, with memberships of from ten to twenty persons, installments of up to Rs. 300 with interest, and funds generally starting at between Rs. 1,000 and 3,000. Those Thakali *Dhikurs* involving the wealthiest businessmen have the largest funds; one begins at Rs. 50,000 and ends at Rs. 78,875 (Appendix 1: E), and another goes from Rs. 24,000 to 52,000.[9] There is talk of organizing a new one starting at Rs. 100,000.

USE OF FUNDS. No restrictions are put on the use of *Dhikur* funds, but there are certain customary investment practices. Traders usually invest their capital in business. This often involves going abroad, i.e., into the trade centers of the lower Nepal hills, the Terai, India, and sometimes

[9] The amount of the fund available at any particular time can be calculated with the following formula:

$F_i = (N-1)\,[(i)\,(X/100)(a) + X]$,

where,

N = number of shareholders,
F_i = fund available at time i,
i = time elapsed (in years) since fund began,
a = increment per 100 per annum, and
X = initial installment.

Note: The initial fund (i = 0) can be determined by using a simplified version of the above formula, $F_0 = (N-1)(X)$.

Southeast Asia. In the Nepal Terai and in Indian cities traders may purchase such commodities as salt, sugar, kerosene, or cloth. These days Bhotias go all the way to Kalimpong in northern West Bengal to purchase boots, bridles, horseshoes, bells, and the like which they formerly secured in the Tibetan trade closer to home. Nyeshang Bhotias are renowned for their trading forays as far away as Bangkok, Singapore, and Hong Kong.

The Thakalis have the most to show for their trading and entrepreneurial skills. One of the most successful Thakali shopkeepers in Pokhara Bazaar estimates that twenty-two years ago he started with a meager Rs. 6,000 in combined *Dhikur* funds and savings. He opened up a small shop and began his business with commodities of Indian origin purchased in Bhairawa on the Nepal-India border. Today he is a member of twelve concurrent *Dhikurs*, the chairman of several of them, and estimates his worth at over six lakh rupees (Rs. 600,000). His business contacts are now as widespread as Bombay, Madras, Calcutta, and Kathmandu. He concentrates most of his effort on the cloth business from his expanded outlet in Pokhara, but of late has begun handling contracts to supply the local building industry. Among the wealthy Thakali merchants his is a typical example.

Some persons organize *Dhikurs* to pay off their debts. Among the more sedentary nontrading populations in the lowlands, *Dhikur* capital is used to pay expenses incurred by social and ritual obligations and to increase one's local assets. Alan Macfarlane (personal communication) reports that among Gurungs in Thak village, Kaski District, *Dhikurs* are used "to raise immediate capital for large enterprises, for instance to buy gold, buffaloes, house-building." Tingaun Gurungs frequently re-lend the money privately to individuals. Girls and women form *Dhikurs* to raise the amounts of their dowries and for petty cash.

DEDUCTIONS FROM THE FUND. Each shareholder is expected to deduct a predetermined amount from the fund in his turn to pay the administrator a small compensation for services. This practice is sometimes dropped in small *Dhikurs*. Each fund-taker provides a specified amount of refreshment to fellow members in his turn — cigarettes and liquor, beer, or tea. In Nyeshang, the last fund-taker feasts the entire membership at his own expense. In Tingaun, if the man who writes up the contracts is someone other than the regular administrator, he is given a few rupees as well. The amounts of all these deductions vary from one *Dhikur* to the next and are influenced by the size of the membership. They are always determined at the beginning.

Auxiliary Funds

SHIGU. Many Thakali *Dhikur* associations incorporate an auxiliary fund

known as *shigu*.[10] Where *shigu* is present, allotment of funds is determined by bidding. The amount of each bid forms the basis of the *shigu* fund; it grows steadily with the addition of new bids and interest in each turn.

Bids are made at each meeting. The highest bidder takes the *shigu* fund at that round and the *Dhikur* fund in the next round to use however he wishes. The only stipulations are that when he receives the *Dhikur* fund he deduct from it the amount of the *shigu* he received plus interest on the *shigu*, plus the amount of his own bid. (The interest on *shigu* is always Rs. 10 per 100 per annum.) This total sum is passed on to the next *shigu* fund-taker who is expected to raise it accordingly.

Because *Dhikurs* which incorporate *shigu* are generally large in membership, there are sometimes two or three organizers. If three, for example, then they take the first three turns (see Rotation of Funds, above). The *shigu* fund is started by the first fund-taker, but as the first, second, and third fund-takers are predetermined in this case, there is no need for them to bid. By convention, however, they each deposit a prescribed sum to start *shigu* (Appendix 1: D); the amounts vary by *Dhikur*.

As bidding becomes competitive, *shigu* grows very rapidly. When the *shigu* fund is going to equal or exceed the amount of the *Dhikur* in the same turn, it is disposed of in a unique way: It is passed on to the second highest bidder to take *as if it were his turn with the Dhikur*, i.e., he is not required to return it at the next meeting, and he is considered to have taken his turn in the *Dhikur*. A new *shigu* fund is begun with the new bid. Conceivably, the *shigu* fund may again equal or exceed the *Dhikur* fund in a future turn, whereupon it will be similarly awarded. Each time this happens, the duration of the *Dhikur* association is shortened by one turn. In the last turn the *shigu* fund is divided equally among all shareholders and the association is dissolved.

SOCIAL FUND. In the large "Thak-Sat-Sae Social *Dhikur*," the Thakalis have implemented yet another innovation, a social fund. The *shigu* system is clearly its antecedent, but there are certain important changes.

Instead of bidding, turns are determined by drawing lots. The social fund is based on prescribed deductions from each *Dhikur* fund in each turn plus interest on the social fund. The interest is Rs. 10 per 100 per annum and is paid by each fund-taker in his turn. Like *shigu*, the allotted fund-taker takes the social fund in one turn, raises it, and returns it taking

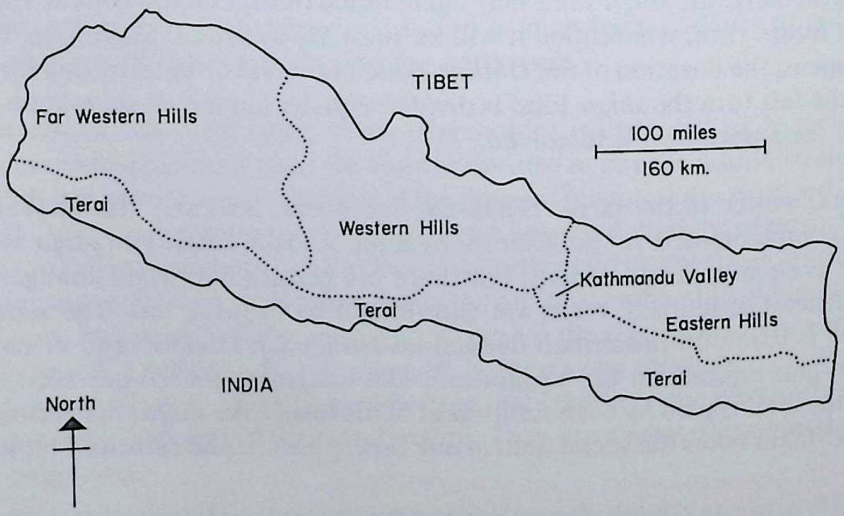
[10] The term *shigu* (Thakali; *Theki* in Nepali) means "a round wooden vessel" (for holding curds, oil, or ghee). By tradition, a *shigu* of ghee (butter) was given as a gift or gratuity to Thakali headmen and chiefs, or in this context to the *gopa* of a *Dhikur*. The practice is no longer in vogue but the concept of giving *shigu* as something extra remains, hence the use of the term to designate an extra, or auxiliary, fund.

the *Dhikur* in the very next round. Unlike *shigu*, however, the social fund is never awarded as a turn with *Dhikur* no matter how large it becomes. Instead, after the last turn, the grand total is deposited in the Thakali social treasury (*samaajik kosh* in Nepali) to be spent on some worthy cause to the benefit of the entire Thakali ethnic community.

SHU-DE. In Tingaun a special refreshment fund called *shu-de* is found.[11] In cases where a shareholder requests early access to the *Dhikur* fund, e.g., second turn, he is required to deposit a prescribed amount of money in *shu-de* (Appendix 1: A and B). This demonstrates the sincerity of his request and the seriousness of his early need, and in a way compensates the other shareholders for the loss of their chances at that turn. Each fund-taker in turn is expected to take both the *Dhikur* fund and the *shu-de* fund at the same time. He raises the latter at the same rate as that prescribed for the *Dhikur*, then returns it for the next fund-taker to take. Periodically, some of the money may be taken out to buy refreshments for all members, or they may decide instead to let the fund grow to the end when they will have one big party.

DISTRIBUTION OF *DHIKURS* IN NEPAL

Until recently, *Dhikurs* were found almost exclusively in Nepal's Western Hills (see Maps). They have been documented in the districts of Mustang, Myagdi, Baglung, Kaski, Lamjung, and Manang. They are most fre-

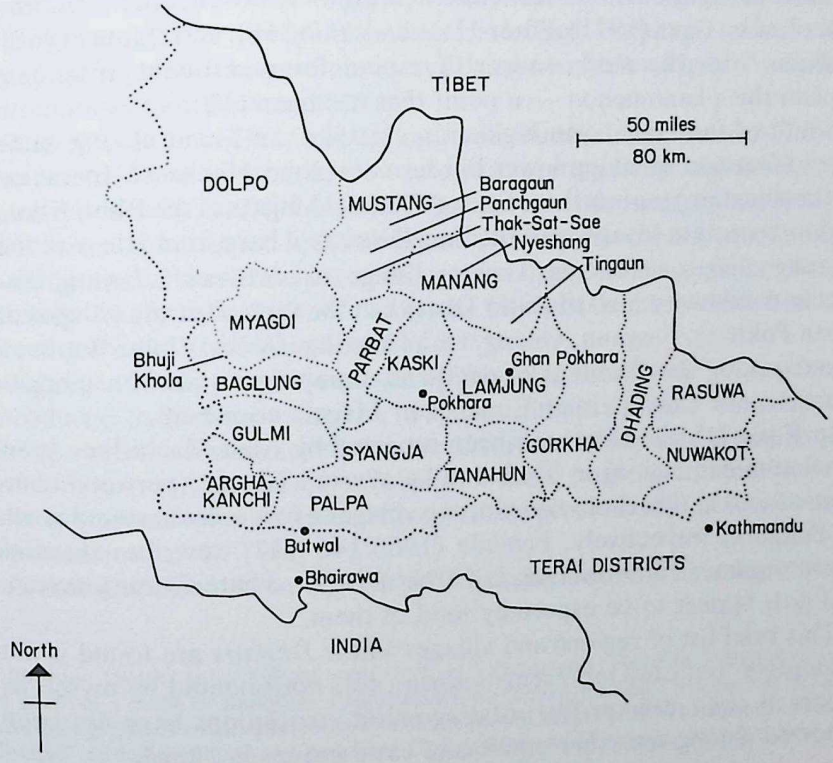


Map 1. Nepal

[11] The term *shu-de* is related to *zhu-do* in the Nyeshang Tibetan dialect, and to the Tibetan *zhu-ba* meaning "to ask, request, petition" (William Stablein, personal communication).

quently found among Bhotia, Thakali, Panchgaunle, and Gurung ethnic groups. *Dhikurs* found in Pokhara Bazaar, Kathmandu, Terai towns, and North India can usually be traced to Thakalis or Gurungs.[12]

The Bhotias of this study are Tibetan-speaking people whose culture is also largely Tibetan. They are agro-pastoralists and traders who live in the Tibetan border regions of Nepal north of the Annapurna Himalayan range. Their *Dhikurs* have been documented in the regions of Baragaun, Nyeshang, and Tingaun.[13]



Map 2. Western hill districts of Nepal with main villages, towns, and regions mentioned in the text

[12] Pignède (1966:146) writes that at the time of his research in 1958 *Dhikurs* seemed to be unknown in the lower lands, at Pokhara or Kathmandu. By the time of my own research in 1971–1972, they had spread far and wide. Gurung soldiers returning from service in the Indian Army report *Dhikurs* at the Gurkha base in Dehra Dun in northern Uttar Pradesh.

[13] Baragaun, "The Twelve Villages," is situated in Mustang District north of Jomosom (in Panchgaun) up to Lo (Mustang-bhot) along the upper Kali-Gandaki River. It also includes the villages east of Kagbeni to Muktinath (see Bista 1967:156–159; Fürer-Haimendorf 1966; and Snellgrove 1961:163ff.) Nyeshang in Manang District takes in the upper reaches of the Marsiangdi River northwest of Chame (see Snellgrove 1961:204ff.). Tingaun, "The Three Villages," is a mixed Gurung and Bhotia region in Manang southeast of Nyeshang, from Chame downriver to Thonje and Tilje (Messerschmidt 1972). Tingaun is also called Gyasumdo (Snellgrove 1961:237–240). No data are available from the Bhotia regions of Lo

The Thakalis and Panchgaunles of Thak Khola[14] are Tibeto-Burman dialect speakers and are related to the Gurungs of the lower hills. They have lived for centuries in close proximity to Bhotias and Tibetans and show the influence of Tibetan culture. Their economy is basically the same as that of their Bhotia neighbors but with much more emphasis on trade, situated as they are on the important north-south Kali-Gandaki River trade route.

Dhikurs have a particular significance to Thakalis who have developed them to their highest level of sophistication in Nepal. The historic rise of Thakali entrepreneurs to economic and political prominence has been described by Bista (1971), Fürer-Haimendorf (1966), and Iijima (1963). *Dhikurs*, with the ready source of capital for investment, may help explain this phenomenon — a point that has been overlooked.

South of the Himalayan highlands, *Dhikurs* are found among some Tibeto-Burman speaking lower hill farmers. John Hitchcock (personal communication) reports them among Chandel Magars of the Bhuji Khola region in western Myagdi and Baglung Districts. I have found them in the Gurung villages, and in one Tamang village, in northeast Lamjung District and westward toward Kaski District in the large Gurung villages of Ghan Pokhara, Pasgaun, Gilung, and Tangting. *Dhikurs* have not been found among the Gurungs of southeast Lamjung or western Gorkha Districts, nor among either Tamangs or Magars elsewhere.

In Kaski District they have been reported by Alan Macfarlane (personal communication) in Thak and by Warren Glover (personal communication) in Ghachok, two Gurung villages a few miles east and north of Pokhara, respectively. Pignède (1966:146–147) describes them as "money games" in Mohoriya, in Parbat District, where Gurung women and girls appear to be especially fond of them.

This brief list of regions and villages where *Dhikurs* are found is not exhaustive, but only represents known cases documented by myself or others as cited. *Dhikur*-like rotating credit associations have not been reported among the other ethnic and caste groups in Nepal.

ORIGINS AND ETYMOLOGY OF TERMS

Thakalis claim to have originated the *Dhikur* system, but the etymological evidence they forward is only speculative. Until more is known about

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in northern Mustang, Nar in northern Manang, or Nupri in northern Gorkha District. *Dhikurs* have not been found in central or eastern Dolpo District (Corneille Jest, personal communication) nor at Tarakot in southern Dolpo (James Fisher, personal communication). (For the spelling of place names, see footnote 3.)

[14] Thak Khola is in the high valley of the Kali Gandaki River, north of the Himalayan peaks. It includes the region of Thak-Sat-Sae, [The Seven Hundred Thak (households),]

credit practices among Western Tibetans and more northerly Nepalese Bhotias, no final statement of origins can be made. But, the etymology of *Dhikur* and *DhukuTi*, the two terms used to designate the same system in Nepal, gives us some clues to both origins and diffusion.

Thakalis say that the term *Dhikur* derives from an older Thakali compound word, *Dhu-khor*. *Dhu* is related to Tibetan *'bru*, pronounced "Dru," meaning "grain," and *-khor* is related to Tibetan *skor-ba*, pronounced "k'or-ba," meaning "to surround, encircle, enclose, . . . return." Hence, *Dhu-khor* means "grain rotating turn by turn."[15] Informants say that the first *Dhikurs* were of grain, usually wheat or barley. (In the lower hills, grain *Dhikurs* are usually of rice.) As cash exchange came to be accepted in place of barter, monetary *Dhikurs* were developed;[16] they far outnumber grain *Dhikurs* today.[17]

The Nepali term *DhukuTi* means "storehouse, barn, treasury." It is also commonly used to mean the concept of rotating credit in general, and more specifically the *Dhikur* fund. *DhukuTi* is written and pronounced in various ways, by region and informant. It was probably adopted by the Gurungs and others in the lower hill regions in part because of its striking similarity to the term *Dhikur*. Today, the Thakalis themselves have taken to using *DhukuTi* in their documents.[18]

Pignède (1966) puts forward the opinion that the *Dhikur* concept was introduced to Nepal by Gurkha soldiers familiar with the workings of similar credit associations among the Overseas Chinese of Hong Kong and Singapore. Lionel Caplan (1967) — and I must agree with him — calls this an unfortunate speculation, but he gives no hint of any better explanation.

It seems reasonable to say that the Thakalis may only have borrowed

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in Mustang District from Tukche southward, and Panchgaun [The Five Villages] which lies north of Tukche to Jomosom. Panchgaunles are regularly called Thakalis, but in fact there are significant social differences between them and the people of Thak-Sat-Sae. I use "Thakali" to designate only the people of Thak-Sat-Sae, and "Panchgaunle" for those of Panchgaun.

[15] In Nyeshang and Tingaun, *Dhikur* is pronounced *Thukur*.

[16] Some monetization of exchange had been achieved in the hill regions by the time of the Gorkha Conquests in the eighteenth century (Regmi 1971). We can be reasonably safe in assuming that monetary *Dhikurs* were commonplace among Thakalis by the late 1800's. Even today, however, cash exchange has not completely replaced barter.

[17] Wealthy Thakali merchants whom I interviewed in Pokhara had difficulty recalling grain *Dhikurs* of their personal acquaintance in recent time. Both grain and livestock *Dhikurs* are currently found in the villages of Baragaun. And, Michael Vinding (personal communication) reports barley *Dhikurs* in the Panchgaun village of Shang where he lived in 1971–1972. Several Shang villagers whom I interviewed called their *Dhikurs*, whether for grain or money, by the local term *prego*, a compound of *pre* which they translated as *jamaani* ([guarantor] in Nepali) and *-go* or *-ko* [to rotate by turn] related to *khor* in Thakali (see text). The term *prego* reflects two important aspects of the system to these people: the guarantee against default and the rotation of the fund.

[18] Thakalis write and pronounce *DhukuTi* as *DhikuDii*.

the original idea of *Dhikur* from Bhotias or Tibetans, but they developed it into an important economic system among themselves and aided its diffusion into regions south and east of Thak Khola. It is likely that Thakalis introduced *Dhikurs* into the major trading communities in the lower Western Hills, adjacent Terai, and Kathmandu — in short, wherever they have migrated, settled, and/or conduct business.[19]

CONCLUDING REMARKS

What other option has a person who needs immediate capital? Taking a private loan (*rin* in Nepali) from a moneylender is the usual alternative.[20] But interest on loans, despite government regulation, is often very high. The legal rate of interest is set at Rs. 10 per 100 per annum. When a borrower is desperate, the moneylender can exact much more; when illiterate, the moneylender may be tempted to take advantage of him by altering the written accounts. Many loans are obtained by offering land or other property as security. Caplan (1970) describes at length the disastrous effects on one Limbu community in East Nepal where the usufruct rights to Kipat lands were forfeited to the Brahman moneylenders. He also reports interest rates as high as 35 percent. The rate can go much higher. Should the borrower have financial problems he has no recourse but to struggle along deferring payment while the interest mounts, or ultimately to forfeit his property. *Dhikurs*, on the other hand, are formed in a spirit of cooperation among friends and if a member comes into hard times he can appeal to his *Dhikur* "brothers" for help.

One interesting variation in moneylending is found in Nyeshang. If a local person takes a short-term loan from a moneylender in the summer (March to September) he does not have to pay any interest. Winter loans, on the contrary, always include interest. The reasoning is this: Winter is the season for trading and loans taken then are usually invested to make a

[19] During the past century certain economic and political conditions have brought Thakalis more into the sphere of Nepalese Hindu society. As early as the mid-1800's Thakalis were moving out of Thak Khola into neighboring regions to take advantage of economic opportunities (to Bhuji Khola in the 1860's and to Tingaun in the 1880's for example). Others migrate seasonally to run roadside inns and pursue trade along the main lowland trade routes in winter. The wealthier Thakalis have established large and permanent business houses in Baglung, Pokhara, Butwal, Bhairawa, and Kathmandu. To some extent the Panchgaunles have mimicked the preeminent Thakali entrepreneurs.

Tracing the diffusion of *Dhikurs* even further, traders and others in Tingaun and Nyeshang probably helped spread the idea into northern Lamjung District. Gurungs from Ghan Pokhara in particular have long maintained strong economic, political, and social (affinal) relations with those of Tingaun. (For more on the Gurungs, see Messerschmidt 1976a, 1976b, 1976d; Messerschmidt and Gurung 1974).

[20] Small, short-term loans are occasionally taken from kinsmen or neighbors. These require no interest or securities. As Caplan notes (1970:93n), they are insignificant and can be ignored.

profit. Summer loans are normally for immediate and personal needs and are seldom invested. Where no profit from investment is expected, the moneylender asks for no interest — a considerate practice. Besides, the money lended is of little value to the lender during the off-season for investment in trade.

To avoid paying interest at all on borrowed capital, the Nyeshang people have another kind of cooperative credit system, a sort of multiple no-interest loan, called *kirta*. As my informant explains it, when a man needs money (say Rs. 1,000) to pay off his debts or to invest, he will go around to his closest friends offer each a drink of liquor or beer, and invite them to back him with *kirta*. Those who agree to join, assemble at his house where he treats them to more drinks and a full meal. Then, if he has gathered ten friends, for example, each will give him Rs. 100 to meet his need. No security is required. Dice are cast to determine the order of repayment and beginning the next year and for as many years as there are moneylenders the borrower pays off his debt to each successively with no interest. There is no rotating fund in *kirta* and if anyone else needs capital he must either form his own *kirta* association, borrow directly from a moneylender, or organize a *Dhikur*.

We have seen that *Dhikurs* permit ready access to capital, sometimes in very large amounts, and foster economic cooperation in the community. Some *Dhikurs* display sincere egalitarian considerations. In Gurung communities, turns are often allotted solely on the basis of need, and not uncommonly a poorer member is encouraged to take the most profitable last turn. He, then, is essentially making a long-term investment in the *Dhikur* itself. (For an example see Appendix 1: F.)

Some *Dhikurs* involve interaction among two or more ethnic groups. In Tingaun and Thak Khola they reflect even broader networks of economic, social, and political association.

The largest *Dhikurs* are found in trading communities where capital for investment in business is the primary motivation. For traders the system is ideal. Anyone who needs money simply gathers up enough people to form a *Dhikur* association and takes the first fund. If someone needs capital periodically, he can organize or join other Dhikurs.[21]

[21] Since this article was written, further research among the Thakali has shed new light on their economic and social development in which *Dhikur* transactions have played a considerable part (See Manzardo and Sharma [1975]).

APPENDIX 1. EXAMPLES OF SELECT *DHIKURS*

A. Tingaun: Gurung-Bhotia

TITLE: The *Dhikur* requested by Govinda (a Gurung)
SHARES: 15
Members are all local, adult Gurungs and Bhotias.
INSTALLMENTS: Rs. 100 with interest of Rs. 16 per 100 per annum
SIZE OF FUNDS (first and last): Rs. 1,400–2,968
ROTATION FREQUENCY: biannual
MISCELLANEOUS DEDUCTIONS: Rs. 10 for administrator's pay; Rs. 37 for refreshments
AUXILIARY FUND: *shu-de*. One Bhotia member requested second place in turn and deposited Rs. 100 in *shu-de*.

B. Tingaun: Gurung-Bhotia

TITLE: The *Dhikur* requested by Sonam Gyalzen (a Bhotia)
SHARES: 17, in partnerships of two each
Members (34) are all adult Bhotias and Gurungs from six local villages.
INSTALLMENTS: Rs. 200 with interest of Rs. 14 per 100 per annum
SIZE OF FUNDS: Rs. 3,200–6,784
ROTATION FREQUENCY: biannual
MISCELLANEOUS DEDUCTIONS: Rs. 30 for administrator's pay; Rs. 41 for refreshments
AUXILIARY FUND: *shu-de*. Two men requested early access to the funds. One deposited Rs. 300 and took the second turn. The other deposited Rs. 250 and took the third turn.

C. Nyeshang: Bhotia

TITLE: The *Dhikur* of Lapka Gurung (a Bhotia)
SHARES: 18, with several partnerships
Members are all Nyeshang Bhotias, adult men and women.
INSTALLMENTS: Rs. 100 with interest of Rs. 10 per 100 per annum
SIZE OF FUNDS: Rs. 1,700–3,145
ROTATION FREQUENCY: biannual
MISCELLANEOUS DEDUCTIONS: a small sum for refreshments
AUXILIARY FUND: none.

D. Thak Khola and Pokhara: Thakali, Bhotia, Panchgaunle, et al.

TITLE: "Cooperating Together *Dhikur*" (*milijulii sahakaarii DhikuDii*)[22]

[22] In formally titled *Dhikurs* the parenthetic title is transliterated from the original written Nepali. Sometimes the English renditions of place names differ; see footnote 3 for comments on spelling.

SHARES: 21, in partnerships of three each
Members include:
29 Thakali men and 4 women (Thak Khola and Pokhara)
9 Panchgaunle men and 5 women (Panchgaun)
11 Bhotia men and 1 woman (Baragaun and Tukche)
1 "Khamba" man (Tibetan refugee) (Tukche)
2 Gurung men (Pokhara)
1 Newar man (Pokhara)
INSTALLMENTS: Rs. 300 with interest of Rs. 10 per 100 per annum
SIZE OF FUNDS: Rs. 6,000–12,000
ROTATION FREQUENCY: biannual
MISCELLANEOUS DEDUCTIONS: Rs. 1 per 100 per annum for administrator's pay; Rs. 189 for refreshments
AUXILIARY FUND: *shigu*. The first four fund-takers pay a prescribed Rs. 60, 157, 330, and 414, respectively, to the *shigu* fund. Bidding begins for the fifth round.

E. Thakali

TITLE: "Thak-Sat-Sae Social *Dhikur*" (*thaak saat say ko samaajik DhikuDii*)
SHARES: 21, in partnerships of five each
The 105 members are all adult Thakalis.
INSTALLMENTS: Rs. 2,500 with interest of Rs. 10 per 100 per annum
Note: Shareholders do not pay any interest until after they have taken their turn with the funds.
SIZE OF FUNDS: Rs. 50,000–78,875
ROTATION FREQUENCY: biannual
MISCELLANEOUS DEDUCTIONS: Rs. 1 per 100 per annum for administrator's pay (jointly); Rs. 250 for refreshments
ADMINISTRATORS: A chairman and secretary-treasurer are elected semiannually from among the 13 headmen of the Thakali Social Reform Organization
AUXILIARY FUND: *Social fund*. The social fund is based on deductions from each *Dhikur* fund at the rate of Rs. 2.50 per 100 per annum plus interest paid by each fund-taker at the rate of Rs. 10 per 100 per annum. The fund accumulates incrementally until the termination of the association when it is deposited into the Thakali social treasury.

F. Lamjung District: Gurung

TITLE: The *Dhikur* of Tej Bahadur
SHARES: 11
Members include 9 Gurung men, 7 of whom are pensioned ex-Gurkha soldiers; 1 Gurung woman; and 1 Gharte man (formerly a slave caste). The Gharte is a poor man and was given the most profitable last turn.
INSTALLMENTS: Rs. 100 with interest of Rs. 10 per 100 per annum
SIZE OF FUNDS: Rs. 1,000–2,000
ROTATION FREQUENCY: annual
MISCELLANEOUS DEDUCTIONS: The fund-taker provides beer for all
AUXILIARY FUND: none.

G. Lamjung District: Gurung

TITLE: The *Dhikur* of Khar Jung
SHARES: 10
Members are all adult Gurung men and women, predominantly of one patrilineal clan, of two villages.
INSTALLMENTS: Rs. 100 with interest of Rs. 10 per 100 per annum
SIZE OF FUNDS: Rs. 900–1,710
ROTATION FREQUENCY: annual
MISCELLANEOUS DEDUCTIONS: The fund-taker provides beer for all
AUXILIARY FUND: none.

H. Rice Dhikur. *Lamjung District: Gurung*

TITLE: The *Dhikur* of Sansar Bahadur
SHARES: 9
Members are all Gurung men and women, of one village.
INSTALLMENTS: 1 *muri* paddy (= 50 kg.) with interest of 1 *paathi* (= 2.5 kg.) per *muri* per annum (see Footnote 9)
SIZE OF FUNDS: 8–11 *muri* + 4 *paathi*
ROTATION FREQUENCY: annual
MISCELLANEOUS DEDUCTIONS: none
AUXILIARY FUND: none.

APPENDIX 2. SAMPLE *DHIKUR* CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS

A. Dhikur *Outline. Thakali*

TITLE: "The Honorable Benevolent Dhaulagiri *Dhikur*" (*shrii paropakaar dhaulaagiri DhikuDii*)
SHARES: 25, with several partnerships
Members are all Thakali with the exception of one Gurung.
INSTALLMENTS: Rs. 1,000 with interest of Rs. 10 per 100 per annum
SIZE OF FUNDS: Rs. 24,000–52,800
ROTATION FREQUENCY: biannual
MISCELLANEOUS DEDUCTIONS: Rs. 10 per 100 per annum for administrators' pay (jointly); Rs. 1 per 100 tax on initial fund for the Thakali social treasury; small sum for refreshments
ADMINISTRATORS: chairman and secretary-treasurer
AUXILIARY FUND: none.

B. Constitution and Bylaws

"The Honorable Benevolent Dhaulagiri *Dhikur*," 2029 v.s. [1972 A.D.], Pokhara.
PREAMBLE. From Niligiri at the east to Dhaulagiri at the west in an area surrounded by mountains, lying in the lap of the Himalaya on the banks of the Kali

Gandaki River, is a region called Thak Khola. Here the *Dhikur* originated among a small group of people called the Thakali, whose ancestors have traditionally made it a source of ready capital. In this scientific age, the *Dhikur* concept is very important and other peoples also have copied it. Our forefathers have given us this great contribution and we have preserved it even in these changing times. Therefore we the members, respecting our forefathers' intentions, hereby give financial aid as debt, openmindedly.

Ever since the time of our forefathers, the *Dhikur* has been a source of ready capital. We, the following members, have asked for financial aid and have agreed to give installments of Rs. 1,000 plus interest each as payment in each turn. By agreement of all the members, Mr. Amrit Prasad Sherchan has been selected as chairman and Mr. Gahun Tulachan as secretary-treasurer, to administrate this *Dhikur*. This *Dhikur's* name will be "The Honorable Benevolent Dhaulagiri *Dhikur*." Its constitution, rules, and clauses have been made and accepting them we have all signed below and hereby present this constitution to you, the honorable chairman and secretary-treasurer.

CLAUSES

1. *Title*. This *Dhikur* will be called "The Honorable Benevolent Dhaulagiri *Dhikur*," 2029 v.s. [1972 A.D.], Pokhara.

2. *Guardians' duties.*

a. If any trouble overcomes this association, the guardians must solve the problem at their discretion so that the association will not be allowed to be destroyed or disrupted.

b. The guardians are the honorable Mr. Amrit Prasad Sherchan, *mukhiyaa* ([headman] in Nepali) of the Thakali Social Reform Organization, Subba Anangaman Sherchan, and Mr. Lalit Narsing Bhattachan.

3. *Secretary-treasurer's duties*

a. He shall keep all records and accounts carefully and systematically.

b. When any obstacles come in the way of the association in any form at any time, he shall call together all the members, appraise them of the problem, hear their decision, and carry it out.

c. He must inform every member seven days in advance of each biannual meeting.

d. He is responsible for keeping all the various documents and contracts of the *Dhikur*.

4. *Duration and schedule of rotation*. The duration of this *Dhikur* shall be from 2029 v.s. [1972 A.D.] to 2041 v.s. [1984], but because of *shigu* it may be shorter by one or two turns.

a. The meetings of this *Dhikur* shall be held twice a year, once every six months, on Asar 1 [June 15] and Pus 1 [December 15].

b. Every member must meet together at four o'clock P.M. at the house of the secretary-treasurer or the chairman [as announced] to give his required installment, or he must send a representative with the installment.

5. *Installments*. Every member, regardless of whether he has taken his turn with the fund or not, must pay his installments of Rs. 1,000 with interest of Rs. 10 per 100 per annum, regularly.

6. *Late-payment fee*. If a member does not come with his installment at the regular time, a late-payment fee of ½ rupee per 100 per day will be charged. The money which comes from this fee shall be deposited in the *shigu* fund.

7 and 8. *Guarantors and fines*. Each *Dhikur* member, according to the decision of the membership, must have one guarantor for each installment. If a

member does not pay his installment within five days after the regular meeting a fine of Rs. 1 per 100 per day will be taken from his guarantor. If a member who has already taken his turn with the fund cannot pay an installment on time, the late-payment fee will also be taken from his guarantor.

9. *The* shigu *fund.*

a. In the first turn, that of the founder, a deduction of Rs. 5 per 100 will be taken from the *Dhikur* fund and deposited in *shigu*.

b. In the second turn, a deduction of Rs. 7.50 per 100 will be taken from the *Dhikur* fund and deposited in *shigu*.

c. From the third turn, the amount added to *shigu* will be determined by bidding.

10. *The* shigu *fund (continued)*. The amount of the *shigu* fund includes the amount passed on from the turn before [including interest], less general expenses [for refreshments]. All shareholders have equal rights to *shigu*. When the amount of the *shigu* fund equals the total amount of the *Dhikur* fund [including interest], the *shigu* is awarded to one shareholder. [See Auxiliary Funds, pages 150–151.]

11. *Taking* shigu. The total amount which is taken as *shigu* in each turn must be borne for six months by the highest bidder.

12. *Taking* Dhikur. Each *Dhikur* fund-taker must present the name of his guarantor to the chairman or the secretary-treasurer 15 days prior to taking his turn.

13. *Taking* Dhikur *(continued)*. If the fund-taker cannot give the name of his guarantor by the 15 days prior to his turn, he will be discharged. If he cannot pay the amount of the bid he has proposed, then that amount is lost to the *shigu* fund and the second highest bidder takes the turn. Later, if the first bidder takes a subsequent turn he must make up the earlier loss plus interest [at Rs. 10 per 100 per annum]. If a shareholder is discharged altogether, he will be refunded the total amount of the installments he made only after the *Dhikur* association terminates.

14. *Misfortune*. If a member who has not yet taken the *Dhikur* fund has a misfortune, he can give the details of his problem to either the chairman or the secretary-treasurer who will consult with the other members and decide if it is justifiable. If the membership decides in his favor, that person will be required only to pay a bid in his turn equal to the bid prescribed for the second round of the *Dhikur*, i.e., Rs. 7.50 per 100.

15. *Notice of installment due*. The chairman or secretary-treasurer must give notice of each installment due in time, but if for some reason the notice does not reach a member he still has the responsibility of remembering the date and of paying his installment on time. He cannot complain.

16. *Receipts*. When paying the installment, each shareholder must take a receipt from the chairman or secretary-treasurer. If he does not take the receipt there will be no proof of payment and he cannot make any complaint about it.

17. *Administrators' pay*. The chairman and secretary-treasurer will be compensated for their duties by a payment of Rs. 10 per 100 on the initial installment by each fund-taker in his turn.

18. *Bidding*. At the time of bidding, shareholders who have not taken the *Dhikur* fund shall submit their bid in writing. No shareholder shall be allowed to bid more than twice in any one round.

19. *Troublemakers*. If any member is found to have any intentions of causing the association trouble or of dissolving it or anything of the like, then the chairman shall call together the entire membership and they, being of one mind, shall make formal complaint for legal action to the head of the Thakali Social Reform Organization.

20. *Cover clause*. If some articles, clauses, or subclauses are not included

herein, then such rules as found in the "Thak-Sat-Sae Social *Dhikur*" will be recognized and implemented automatically.

21. *Changes in the bylaws.* If some articles or rules of this *Dhikur* constitution need changing according to the condition of the times, they can be changed by general agreement of all the members.

22. *Restrictions on administrators being guarantors.* The chairman and secretary-treasurer, being the specially appointed and responsible members of this association are hereby restricted from being guarantors for any other members.

23. *Passbook.* Every member has been given a passbook in which to keep account of his installments. Members are requested to keep their passbooks safely.

24. *Partnerships.* Among the members in this *Dhikur* are some who have taken half shares and others in partnerships of three or four. A partnership of two persons may submit the names of either one or two guarantors, subject to acceptance by the general membership.

25. *Contributions to the Thakali Social Reform Organization.* This *Dhikur* association, like all *Dhikurs* which are functioning within the confines of Gandaki Zone, is required to submit Rs. 1 per 100 on the initial fund to the Thakali Social Reform Organization. In this way the Social Reform Organization is supported.

[Note: Gandaki Zone includes the districts of Manang, Parbat, Kaski, Lamjung, Syangja, and Tanahun. Thak Khola is in Mustang District, Dhaulagiri Zone. This clause is designed to tax all Thakali *Dhikurs* functioning outside of the region of Thak Khola.]

APPENDIX 3. GUARANTOR'S CONTRACT

A. Simple Statement of Security: Tingaun

In my turn I have taken 1,000 rupees. My guarantor is Bal Bir. If I cannot pay back my loan, my guarantor Bal Bir will pay.

[Signed by shareholder and guarantor, witnessed, dated, and kept by the administrator.]

B. Formal Printed Statement of Security: Thakali

"General Cooperation *Dhikur*," Pokhara.

Shareholder

It is written that I ....name...., the grandson of ....., and the son of ....., residing at ....., age ....., promise to pay Rs. ....., written as ..... rupees, together with all the shareholders of the "General Cooperation *Dhikur*" numbering 24 persons, each to the amount of Rs. ..... The above written and true account is due every six months according to the rules of this *Dhikur* association. If I cannot pay the amount within the prescribed time, I have given the name of my guarantor below; he will pay. Saying this I hereby give of my own free will the signs of both thumbs.

Debtor's sign,
[thumbprints]

Guarantor
Concerning the above mentioned debtor .....name....., if he cannot pay the six months' installments by the given date, I will pay. If I cannot pay in time the members of the "General Cooperation *Dhikur*" can take anything from my house [as security]. Saying this I here give the signs of both thumbs to you, the secretary-treasurer of the "General Cooperation *Dhikur*."

I am....., the grandson of..... and the son of..... I reside at.....
My age is .....

Guarantor's sign,
[Thumbprints]

Witnesses
1. ..... 2. .....
Date .....year, month, date and day of the week.....

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The Role of the Priest in Sunuwar Society

ALAN FOURNIER

> L'homme en présence de la nature y sent confusément une multitude infinie de forces prêtes à s'exercer aux dépens de sa faiblesse; son panthéon, toujours ouvert, a toujours place pour de nouveaux hôtes. Le prêtre n'est pas un médecin d'âmes, c'est un spécialiste de rites; comme le dieu qu'il sert, il a son ressort de compétence ou il excelle, et laisse volontiers le champ libre aux voisins. S. Lévi, *Le Népal*, volume 1, p. 317.

On reading works on Himalayan ethnic groups, especially those pertaining to the religious aspects of their society, one is struck by the dichotomy that often exists in the role of the religious officiant: on the one hand he is a medium, a magician, or a shaman; on the other a diviner, a priest, or a sacrificer. Among the Sunuwars,[1] a small Bodic ethnic group living in Eastern Nepal mainly between the banks of the Khimti and Maulung

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Sabra is a Sunuwar village on the western bank of the Likhu Khola, where most of my research took place. I would like to take this occasion to thank all the inhabitants of this village for their patience and kindness.

[1] The Sunuwars, a Sino-Tibetan tribe belonging to the Bodic group (Shafer 1953), number about 15,000 to 20,000 inhabitants in Nepal, and around 3,500 in India, Sikkim, or Bhutan. The bibliography in English on the Sunuwars is rather scanty; they are occasionally mentioned in administrative reports or in handbooks for the Indian army (see Bista 1972:200–203). In Nepali, however, there is a little booklet written by a Sunuwar (Sunuwar 1956).

The Nepali terms are based on Turner's method of transcription; the Sunuwari transcriptions are my own. For further information about the Sunuwar language, see Bieri and Schulze (1971).

rivers, one comes across both these types of officiants: the *Puimbo* (a male shaman) or the *Ngiami* (a female shaman) and the *Naso* (a priest). In this paper I should like to discuss in particular the role of the latter.

In Sunuwar society, particularly on the Likhu Khola, a *Naso* is important as a man of knowledge and as a conductor of rituals who knows the propitiatory formulas (*pidar*) used for invoking the deities of the Sunuwar pantheon and who sacrifices buffaloes, pigs, goats, or chickens during public or semipublic ceremonies.[2] Although possessing the power and the strength (*tung*) of summoning up various divinities, he cannot incarnate them himself without the aid of a medium: a *Puimbo* or a *Ngiami.* A *Naso* never falls into a trance.

The position of *Naso* is always hereditary, contrary to that of *Puimbo* or *Ngiami.* A *Naso* must choose his successor from among his male offspring. This choice usually falls on the son or grandson whom he considers to be the most intelligent and most able to perform religious functions. During the period of initiation the pupil *Naso* is trained to memorize a great variety of propitiatory formulas or chants by repetitive mnemonic procedures. When he is about six or seven years old, the future *Naso* accompanies his father to different rituals in order to familiarize himself with the different sequences which he must reenact later in private under the guidance of his *guru*. He also must learn by heart all the myths and traditions of his own culture which he gleans from village elders. If his father dies before he has completed his training, the young pupil finds himself obliged to ask the village community to contribute to the expenses of completing his instruction as the future conductor of village rituals. The *Naso* inherits the sacrificial bow and arrows on the death of his father in return for which he must carry out certain funerary rites.[3]

The paraphernalia of the *Naso* are very simple. When he is officiating, he wears his everyday dress in clean white material ornamented with one or two necklaces of blue and red stones, interspersed with a few seeds of *kolol* (*Sapindus mukerossi* Gaertn.) and *bhirkaulo* (*Coix lacryma* Jobi Linn.). On his head he sports a large white cotton turban (*pheta*) which he

[2] When I employ the term *Naso* in this communication, I invariably refer to the *Duma Naso*. There are, however, three other types of *Naso,* whose functions differ from those of the former and whose period of initiation is much shorter: the *Sher-pa Naso* is always a brother of the *Duma Naso,* and can officiate in his stead during certain curative or preventive sacrifices, e.g., the *Kalika puja* or *Bhimsen puja*; the *Dhupe Naso* is usually a son of the *Sher-pa,* and as his name indicates, his duty is to recite *pidar* accompanied by the burning of juniper; the *Shipe Naso* is often an assistant and this office is frequently assigned to the youngest brother of the *Sher-pa* or the *Dhupe.* A *Shipe Naso* can subsequently become a *Sher-pa* or *Dhupe Naso* if he wishes.

[3] This was the case, for example, of Guru Naso at Sabra who, orphaned at an early age, was brought up by his grandfather, himself a *Duma Naso.* When he was nine years old, his grandfather died and it was his duty to recite the mortuary invocations on his grave. Then Guru Naso inherited the bow and arrows of his grandfather, some of which had been the property of his *Naso* ancestors.

has received from the person asking for the ritual. At his right side he carries a small bag (*dun-tahilo*) decorated with yellow tassels and cowries. When he is officiating at a ceremony he is seated on a musk-deer skin or on a blanket if there is one available or otherwise on a paddy mat (*gundri*). In front of him is placed a red copper vessel (*tamar*) containing a branch of *hopa* (*Thysa nalaena agrestis*) which is used as a holy-water sprinkler, and an earthen censer (*dhupauro*) containing burning ashes and juniper resin. To his right are placed two knives: a small one (*lalukarda*) for sacrificing pigs, and a *khukuri* (*lalutsub*) for goats and chickens.

During the *Candi* festival, which takes place every year in *Baisak-purne* (the night of the full moon in mid-April to mid-May), the *Naso* holds a large drum (*dhol*) which he only beats prior to the sacrifice and then, using his bow and arrow, he shoots through the heart of the buffalo or the pig.

The *Naso* must know how to conduct a variety of rituals which can be subdivided into four categories:

1. public rituals: *Candi, Ghil, Naesa, Khas*;
2. seasonal rituals: sowing (*jojor washi*), harvest (*nogi*);
3. private and domestic rituals: births, name giving, weddings, funerals, ancestor worship; and
4. curative and preventive rituals for human beings and domestic animals: *Kalika puja, Messalmi puja, Saguni, Bhimsen, Antim, Aitabare.*

During *Candi*, a Sunuwar village festival which occurs every year on both banks of the Likhu Khola, the *Naso* dances in front of the buffalo and pigs before sacrificing them. In general buffaloes are sacrificed on the west side of the river and pigs on the east. (It is interesting that the river seems to be a sacrificial borderline in Eastern Nepal between the buffaloes and pigs.) *Ghil, Naesa,* and *Khas* are lineage rituals that are celebrated every twenty to twenty-five years, once by each generation, in the lineage house. On this occasion, pigs, goats, and chickens are offered to the ancestral spirits. The seasonal rituals are also performed in the lineage house. Domestic and private rituals as well as curative and preventive ceremonies take place in rich orthodox Sunuwar houses during the daytime. Nowadays, however, Sunuwars ask the services of a Brahman.

After this brief description of the role of the *Naso*, we must now examine that of the *Puimbo* or the *Ngiami* in order to highlight the essential differences between them.

As already mentioned, the position of the *Puimbo* or *Ngiami* is never hereditary, though the cases of shamans who do not belong to a specific lineage are rare. The vocation of the *Puimbo* or *Ngiami* becomes evident at a very early age. A girl or a boy infant while minding cattle in the jungle

will suddenly become possessed by a dwarf jungle spirit (*banjhakri*).[4] In his home, a grotto generally, this "wild spirit" imparts to the future *Puimbo* or *Ngiami* the rudiments of their religious training: *mantra*; formulas; and how to make a shamanist drum (*dhyanro*). Whereas in general the *Naso* operates and sacrifices during the daytime, the *Puimbo* or *Ngiami* prefer to perform their rites by night. When exercising his religous duties, the *Puimbo* wears a kind of long female garment (*jama*) and a turban in which he has inserted porcupine needles. The *Puimbo* or *Ngiami* must banish the wandering souls of those who have died a violent death (e.g. from suicide, childbirth, accidents, and diseases) or exorcise ghosts and evil spirits from the living. When he is operating indoors, the *Naso* is seated in the private quarters of the house near the main pillar. On the contrary, the *Puimbo* or *Ngiami* is seated and operates in that part of the house open to friends, affines, or visitors. When both operate together the *Naso* sits on the right carrying his sacrificial *lalutsub,* and the *Puimbo* or *Ngiami* on the left, carrying his (or her) wooden magical knife (*phur-bu*). During public or semipublic rituals, the *Naso* needs the help of the *Puimbo* or *Ngiami* whose only role is to bring down to the sanctuary the gods or spirits for whom the sacrifice is carried out, and then when the religious ceremony is over, to order them to return to the supernatural world. Whereas the *Naso* can only operate within the Sunuwar community, a *Puimbo* or a *Ngiami* can act as intercessor between evil spirits and people belonging to different ethnic groups or castes. The *Naso* is buried standing up, with his *dhol* placed on his grave, while the *Puimbo* or the *Ngiami* is interred in the sitting position with his *dhyanro* on his grave. Sunuwars are now cremated in accordance with Hindu custom.[5]

If one summarizes the respective roles of the *Naso* and *Puimbo* in a dual system of symbolic classification (Table 1), one can see the opposition between both, in pairs of opposite but complementary terms.

Having established the dual nature of religious functions among the Sunuwars, we can make interesting comparisons with those of other Himalayan ethnic groups.

Among the Pahari-speaking people who claim to be Hindus, the priest or sacrificer and the psychopomp play more or less parallel roles to those of the *Naso* and *Puimbo*. In Eastern and Central Nepal among the castes, a *Pujari* and a *Jhakri* accomplish these functions. A *Pujari* is "someone who is regularly paid for performing a rite in a temple and for looking after the temple" (Sarma 1954:660); and a *Jhakri* is "a healer who cures the sick by making known [the will of] the divinities (*devata*) or the ghosts (*pret*)

[4] For a more detailed description of the initiation and role of the *Puimbo* or the *Ngiami*, see Fournier (1973).

[5] It is only since 1947–1948 that the Sunuwars cremate their dead. The erstwhile cemetary is still to be found south of Khaping (a settlement), in a rocky escarpment. People are fearful of passing by there, and when obliged to do so, they hurry their pace, the women hiding their faces with a scarf and the men bowing their heads.

Table 1.

Naso	*Puimbo/Ngiami*
male	male or female
hereditary	nonhereditary
right	left
sacrifice	trance
daytime	nighttime
ordinary male dress	specific female dress
life-cycle	death-cycle
living	spirits
normal death	abnormal death
gods, ancestral spirits	ghosts, evil spirits
auspicious	inauspicious
private part of the house	public part of the house
public or semipublic rituals	private rituals
training inside the village	training inside the jungle
Sunuwars	multiethnic
sacred	profane
dhol; lalutsub	*dhyanro; phur-bu*
buried standing up	buried sitting up

whom he causes to enter his own body by means of prayers-incantations (*mantra-tantra*)" (Sarma 1954:401). In Western Nepal among the castes, a particular kind of *Jhakri* is to be found, known as the *Dhami.* A *Dhami* is "a person who expels such obstructions as evil spirits (*bhut*); ghosts (*pret*); witches (*boksi*); etc., by making them enter his own body by means of prayers-incantations (*mantra-tantra*)" (Sarma 1954:541). The *Dhami,* however, contrary to the *Jhakri,* never uses a magic drum (*dhyanro*) but demands the services of a musician-tailor (*Damai*) (Gaborieau 1969:30–34). The same dichotomy can be observed outside of Nepal in Garhwal, for example, where one finds the *Pujari* and the shaman (*Baki*). In this area, however, the *Pujari* is the caretaker of the temple who, when performing rites, speaks to the deity by chanting prayers and incantations and on rare occasions beheads a goat which is then offered to the *devata*; and the *Baki* is "primarily a diagnostician who is able to call upon his personal god at will, becomes possessed by him, and then diagnoses the difficulties of his client through the wisdom of the god" (Berreman 1963:90ff.).[6]

Among the Bodic-speaking people, a similar duality of functions is to be noted among religious officiants. In West and Central Nepal one finds among Magars the *Pujari,* a "young unmarried boy" and the shaman (*Jhakri*) (Hitchcock 1966:27–31; 1967:157); or among Gurungs,

[6] For more details concerning the *Jhakri* of Nepal, see Macdonald (1962, 1966, 1968), particularly 1962:108, where a definition of a *Jhakri* is given. For an account of the *Dhami* as oracles, see Pignède (1966), Gaborieau (1969), or Bista (1971:158). In the same work, Bista gives an extremely enlightening account of the *Pujari* (1971:139–152). In this paper the Tibetan-speaking oracles are not mentioned: for further information see Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1956.

the *Klihbri* and the *Pucu* (Pignède 1966:293–298); and among western Tamangs, the *Lambu* and the *Bombo* (Höfer 1969:26–27). In Eastern Nepal also, the Rais have the *Nokchhoe,* "the religious leader," and the *Ngopa* who "is possessed by spirits and announces the verdict of gods" (Bista 1972:40–42); and the Limbus have the *Phedanma* and the *Yaba* or *Yuma* (Sagant 1969:115). In a recent article Sagant discusses the opposite yet complementary roles of the *Phedanma* and of the *Bijuwa* (a kind of shaman, synonymous with *Yaba* and *Yuma*).[7] The *Phedanma* is always a male officiant who wears everyday dress. He performs all the auspicious rituals in his village. The *Bijuwa,* on the contrary, can be male or female and is dressed in a long female garment. He is hired to carry out all the rites performed for inauspicious events, especially death by violence. Like the Sunuwar *Naso,* the *Phedanma* can operate indoors in the private quarter reserved for the household only; on the other hand, the *Bijuwa,* like the *Puimbo,* sits in the public part of the house used for entertaining friends or visitors (Sagant 1973:70–74). Among the Lepchas one finds the *Padem*, "a hereditary masculine priest" and the *Mun* who is a male or female shaman (Siiger 1956:83). The *Padem* is "the first step to becoming *Mun*" and therefore has less importance in Lepcha society (Gorer 1967:215). The *Padem* as well as the *Mun* have the right to offer sacrifice.

If one takes a quick glimpse outside of Nepal, one again comes across this dichotomy in the various roles of religious specialists. In Kulu, in the Western Himalayas, among the Kanashis of Malana, for instance, two types of officiant can be distinguished: the *Pujara* [the priest] and the *Gur* [mouthpiece of god], who "at certain ceremonies goes into a state of possession in which he becomes the vehicle of communication between the god and the villager" (Rosser 1960:81). With regards to the Bodic-speaking groups in the eastern part of the Himalayas, particularly in Arunachal Pradesh, the roles of various officiants are less easily definable due to a lack of precise information. Among the Subansiri Daflas there are three types of religious performer: the *Nijik Nube* who "treats only ordinary diseases and observes omen in the eggs"; the *But Nube* who cures sickness and performs sacrifices; and the *Nyoki Nube* who is a shaman (Shukla 1965:89–90). Among the Padam-Miniong Adis, however, one meets again with the male diviner (*Nyibo*) and the medium

[7] There is some confusion concerning the exact role exercised by the Limbu *Phedanma.* According to Caplan (1970:110), a "*Phedanma* discovers his power through dreams or, as is more often the case, by becoming possessed." This opinion was confirmed privately by R. L. Jones. Hermanns, however, like Sagant, notes that "the *Phedanma* of the Limbus differs from the others who perform the sacrifice in that he does not tremble; — by this is meant the trembling that comes over them when they are possessed by a spirit" (Hermanns 1954:12). Maybe there are two types of *Phedanma* whose roles vary from region to region: in Ilam as in Panchthar, the *Phedanma* is possessed, but in Taplejung as in Darjeeling it would appear that he is only a sacrificer who, though capable of going on "ritual journeys," does not fall into trance.

(*Miri*) who wears a woman's skirt and who can be of either sex; but "a *Nyibo* performs by day whereas a *Miri* functions only at night" (Roy 1960:248–251). Fürer-Haimendorf (1954:592), however, notes that a *Mirü* (*Miri*) is able to go into trance and an *Ipak Mirü* is at the same time an exorciser who propitiates and offers sacrifice. Similar differences can be observed among the Gallong Adis, except that a *Nyibo* can also be a medium (Dunbar 1913–17:73; Srivastava 1962:101–102). But it is among the far away Tangsa confederacy that one again comes across a distinct opposition in the role of the priest (*Tingwa*) and that of the male or female diviner (*Taiteling* or *Talwa*), though their office is not hereditary (Dutta 1959:66).

One can conclude from this brief survey that the dual roles of religious specialists in many Himalayan ethnic groups, though of an opposing yet complementary nature, vary widely from tribe to tribe, and that it is virtually impossible to place them into clear-cut categories. There exist the medium, the shaman, the psychopomp who can become priest, the sacrificer, and the diviner.

If one refers back to the Sunuwars, one can observe significant changes taking place in their religious practices. The Sunuwars claim that when they emigrated to their present habitat, the country was uninhabited; but with the heavy migration and settlement of Indo-Nepalese castes in this area during the 200 years after the conquest of Prythvi Narayan Shah, and more recently with the infiltration of other ethnic groups due to the opening of new mines, the Sunuwar population lost part of their *Kipat* lands which were transformed into *Birta* lands[8] or were taken under mortgage. Their economic impoverishment probably explains why the Sunuwars have forsaken expensive rituals utilizing blood sacrifice, cereals, and large quantities of fermented beer or distilled liquor. Thus, among the Surels, the oldest subgroup of Sunuwars, who live on the banks of the Suri Khola, the *Nakso* (*Naso*) has practically become "unemployed" as a conductor of rituals and his last village sacrifice was performed twenty years ago.[9]

The Brahmans, Chetris, and Newars plan to collect a little money in the future to hold one large buffalo sacrifice to increase the fertility of their land (bought or stolen from the illiterate Surels), even though this sacrificial ritual is purely Surel and observed only by them. Furthermore, contact with various other castes or ethnic groups in the bazaars (*bajar*),

[8] Regmi describes the *Kipat* system as "land [that] is held on a tribal, village, kindred or family basis, and individuals have definite rights in this land by virtue of their membership in the relevant social unit. Hence title to land has a communal character and it is usufructuary, rather than absolute" (Regmi 1965:82). He also notes that "*Birta* meant an assignment of income by the State in favor of individuals in order to provide them with a livelihood" (Regmi 1964:2).

[9] The Surels, who number about 140 inhabitants, live in Suri, a village on the Suri Khola in the Suri-Tinekhu Haleshwar *panchayat*. The Surels speak an archaic Sunuwar dialect.

periodic markets (*hat*), or annual fairs (*mela*)[10] tends to encourage people to abandon their own religious traditions. On both banks of the Khimti Khola, the Sunuwars are thus in permanent relation with other ethnic groups because several important routes used by many different peoples pass close by their villages.[11] The opening of the Jiri market every Saturday[12] has exposed them to outside influence, in particular to Sanskritization.[13] Nowadays they rarely utilize the services of their *Naso* for the performance of life-cycle and seasonal rituals, preferring instead the services of a Brahman, who is less expensive and considered more up-to-date. They have abandoned their costly village rituals, except in the village of Pharpu where they still celebrate the *Naesa,* a semipublic ritual held every twelve years in a lineage house. If on the Likhu Khola, the more isolated Sunuwars still require their *Naso* to perform public or semi-public sacrifices, they also are beginning to employ a Brahman pundit for certain rites such as name giving, funerals, or thanksgiving (*Sat Narayan puja*).

In the face of this slow but irresistible Sanskritization among the *Kirat* people,[14] the development of nativist movements[15] can be observed, contrary to the views held by Caplan (1970:202). In Khiji, an eastern Likhu Khola village, for example, a Sunuwar *Naso* who served in the British army as a Gurkha soldier, is now leader of such a movement. This

[10] The *bajar, hat,* or *mela* are similar to those described by Sagant in Taplejung and Terhathum (Sagant 1968:90–118).

[11] There are several roads traversing the Sunuwar *Kipat*: the two most important wind along the tops of the mountain ridges, running parallel on either side of the Khimti Khola; the road west of the river goes from Jiri to Ramechhap or to Chisopani where people go to buy salt; the road on the eastern side goes from the bazaar of Those to Ramechhap, the chief town of the district. The Sunuwars control three important bridges crossing the Khimti Khola: in Digi, in Betali, and in Rasnalu; the latter is just newly built and is rapidly coming more into use (Schneider 1969:1–8).

[12] Since 1964 the market at Jiri (*hat*) has become an important trading place. Jiri is on the main route between Kathmandu and the eastern part of Nepal, particularly Namche Bajar, at the foot of Everest (Schmid 1969).

[13] I am using the definition of Srinivas (1967), cited by Caplan: "Sanskritization is the process by which a 'low' caste or tribe or other group takes over the customs, rituals, belief, ideology and style of life of a high and, in particular, a 'twice-born' caste" (Caplan 1970:189, fn. 2).

[14] The *Kirat* are mentioned in Indian epic drama such as the *Mahabharata.* According to Nepalese traditions, they occupied the Kathmandu Valley (Nepal) before the Licchavi dynasty just prior to and during the early years of the Christian era (Regmi 1969:54–64). Nowadays, the ethnic groups going by this name live in the eastern part of Nepal: the Rais, Limbus, and Yakhas. The Sunuwars also claim to be *Kirat.* Shafer has shown that the Sunuwar dialect closely resembles certain Rai dialects (Shafer 1953:356–374). A large number of Sunuwars, when living in the capital or in India, abandon their Sunuwar name for that of *Kirat,* as many people believe that they belong to the polluted "occupational caste" of the goldsmiths (*Sunar*) (see Macdonald 1970:146, fn.23).

[15] According to Linton, "a nativist movement is any conscious organized attempt on the part of a society's members, to revive or perpetuate selected aspects of its culture" (Linton 1943:230). Although this definition has been convincingly critized by Worsley (1957:267–276) and by La Barre (1972:42), it remains the most adequate one to date.

movement is based on indigenous religious concepts and has a strict moral code, advocating the prohibition of beer, liquor, meat, smoking, gambling, female abduction, and fighting. It would seem that these Sunuwar reformists wish to become more orthodox than the orthodox Brahmans. I have heard of similar nativist movements among certain Thulung or Bahing Rai villages; and Rex L. Jones (personal communication) says he has observed the same type of phenomena springing up among the Limbus.

Unlike the *Naso,* the *Puimbo* or *Ngiami* is still very popular and much in demand in the multiethnic village of Suri as well as in the Sunuwar area. The Jirels, a mixed subgroup of Sunuwars who live between the rivers Tamba Kosi and Khimti Khola, a little further northwest than Sunuwars proper,[16] are Buddhists, and use lamas as priests and *Puimbo* who are at the same time shamans and sacrificers. (It is unthinkable for a Sunuwar *Puimbo* or a *Ngiami* to offer blood sacrifice, because the shedding of blood is considered incompatible with their office as vehicles of communication between men and the spirit world.) Parallel cases occur among Himalayan tribes such as the Tharus *Bharara* (Srivastava 1958:86–87); the Sherdukpens *Jiji* (Sharma 1961:75–76); the Hrussos *Mugou* (Sinha 1962:126–128); or the Idu Mishmis *Igu* (Baruah 1963).

The *Naso* like the *Puimbo* embodied the old Sunuwar traditions: the one conducting *pidar* and offering sacrifice during rituals; the other calling on the deities to come down to the sanctuary and replenish themselves with the scent of the blood of victims to be sacrificed, before banishing them once again to the supernatural world, as well as exorcising the sick possessed by evil spirits and practicing divination. However, this perfect balance between the two functions is gradually disappearing, and in the next few years the office of the *Naso* will have ceased to exist, and no doubt anyone will be able to perform sacrifices, if he so wishes. The *Puimbo,* on the other hand, has a fine future ahead of him as long as there is a lack of doctors, teachers, and chemists in the region.

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[16] Roughly 3,000 Jirels are found in four *panchayats*: Chhetarpa, Jhyankhu-Paldung, Jiri, and Jungu-Yebo; and their highest concentration is in the Jiri and Sikri valleys. The Surels are reckoned to be a mixed subgroup arising from a cross between Sunuwar hunters and Sherpani. They speak a language closely related to Tibetan (see Strahm and Maibaum 1971).

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A New Rural Elite in Central Nepal

ANDRÁS HÖFER

1. The political importance of the ex-Gurkha soldiers in Nepal has not received due attention from anthropologists. One of the exceptions is Hitchcock (1966:104–109). Writing on the future of the Magars, he points out "the growing leadership potential," the prime source of which is the military service in the British and Indian Armies. (About the soldiers, see also Pignède 1966:36–44; Caplan 1970:113–124, 170–179; Joshi and Rose 1966:92–94, 493.)

I will try to show, in a preliminary way, how a group of Tamang ex-soldiers emerged as a new village elite by filling the vacuum left by recent political changes in Nepal. "Elite" has been defined as a group of persons "with the greatest access to and control of values" (Gould and Kolb 1964:234). I will focus on the notion of "access" rather than that of "control." The soldiers described below are leaders within the broader village elite or among the notables; the notables being the assembly of those men who settle disputes and decide upon things of common interest in the village. First, I will simply present facts and events and then explain the background of these facts and events.

My fieldwork area lies to the west of Trisuli Bazar (the central part of the Dhading District, Bagmati Zone) in Central Nepal, and covers a group of Tamang villages. The Tamangs are one of the ethnic minorities of Nepal; they are nominally Buddhists, show Mongoloid racial characteristics, and speak a language akin to Tibetan. In a few Tamang villages of my fieldwork area, there is a separate ward inhabited by Hindu untouchables, mainly by the blacksmiths, *kami*. The Tamang villages are inter-

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spersed with settlements of other Hindu castes, such as Brahmans, Chetris, and Newars. Except for some shopkeepers among the Newars, these castes are agriculturists like the Tamangs.

Relations between the Tamangs and the higher Hindu castes are affected by differences in status and wealth. As Buddhists, beef eaters, and alcohol drinkers, the Tamangs rank relatively low in the traditional caste hierarchy. While this difference has become less important because the caste hierarchy is no longer legally sanctioned, the difference in wealth is still considerable. One of the reasons for the poverty of the Tamangs lies in their traditional attachment to dry field cultivation (maize, millet) at relatively high altitudes. The wealth of the Brahmans and Chetris derives partly from the fact that they cultivate fertile, lowland rice fields on which irrigation is possible, and partly from the privileges the government accorded them in the past.

As a whole, the Hindu castes immigrated to the area later than the Tamangs. During the nineteenth century, the government donated land to the dominant groups among the Brahmans and Chetris, and this policy affected several Tamang villages. Decrees obligated the villagers to forced labor (corvée) on the fields donated to the Brahmans and Chetris, and to pay taxes in cash and kind to the latter. These donations of land or of tax-collecting rights were called *birta*. A few other Tamang villages were made directly dependent on the government in that, instead of paying taxes, their inhabitants had to carry loads which were mainly goods destined for the military or for the palace at Kathmandu. This was called the *hulaki* service and was also established during the nineteenth century.

It is mainly from this impact of the government that the traditional village elite among the Tamangs emerged. This elite consisted of the village headman and other functionaries. As appointees of the *birta*-owners and of the district authorities, they were invested with the responsibility for collecting taxes, organizing forced labor, and maintaining security within the villages. The functions of these appointees were transmitted from father to eldest son. The position of this elite was more or less uncontested until after the end of the Rana period when, between 1956 and 1959, the first soldier generation among the Tamangs returned home.

In this area, the first Tamang soldiers were recruited to the then British-Indian Army during World War II. They all enlisted as *Gurungs* (the name of another ethnic minority) because the army did not accept Tamangs at that time. After the end of the war, most of them stayed on in the military and opted for the Indian army when, in 1947, the Gurkha battalions were divided between Great Britain and India.

What happened when, between 1956 and 1959, the first soldier generation returned home? Having completed fifteen years of service, they

came back often with considerable savings and with the right to a pension. But instead of contenting themselves with the material benefits of the army service, they took the risk of conflict and engaged in actions which one can roughly label "reformist." These actions aimed, in their own formulation, at emancipating the Tamangs from poverty, ignorance, and low status.

Examples of these actions include the following:

1. Partly under the leadership of the energetic Jang Bahadur (a pseudonym) they set up a loose organization which activated many ex-soldiers, not only Tamangs, in the Dhading District. With the help of the Indian embassy in Kathmandu, they established the first primary schools in the villages of the area.
2. They promoted the conversion of dry fields into irrigated fields and taught that the attachment to dry cultivation was one of the causes of Tamang impoverishment.
3. They were agents of a limited Hinduization, setting up cult places for Hindu deities (with which they became acquainted in the army) and trying to suppress the "libertinage" characterizing the general sexual behavior among the Tamangs and distinguishing the latter from their higher Hindu caste neighbors.
4. They undertook to fight against the traditional Tamang elite, accusing them of corruption and of "backwardness."
5. They openly opposed the high-handedness and usurious practices of the Brahmans and Chetris.
6. They stood for a "democratization" in intercaste relationships and, among other things, for a better treatment of the untouchables.
7. On the eve of the first general elections in 1959, most of the soldiers sided with the Congress Party of B. P. Koirala. In the nothern and central parts of the Dhading district, about 60 percent of the election volunteers working for the Congress Party were ex-soldiers, many of them Tamangs. It was with the help of the Congress Party that the Tamang soldiers in my fieldwork area hoped to repel the opposition Gorkha Parishad Party which they held to be a party of Brahmans and Chetris.
8. In 1959 and 1960, some of the soldiers took a leading part in the riots known as "the West number 1[1] riots." In the northern and central parts of the Dhading district, these riots were, initially, mainly a conflict between the Tamangs on the one hand and the moneylenders and landowners among the Brahmans and Chetris on the other.
9. After the royal coup in 1960, many soldiers were ready to collaborate — though not without some hesitation at the beginning — with the new government. They contributed much to preparing the way for the new village *panchayats* (executive councils) and for a limited reconciliation between the Tamangs and the higher Hindu castes.

Directly or indirectly, the soldiers' loosely organized movement was successful in many respects. Most of the primary schools (now under government control) of the area were founded by them; the conversion of dry land to irrigated fields has raised the food production in general and freed many Tamangs from the dependence on landowners and moneylenders among the Brahmans and Chetris.

[1] The former district West number 1 included the western half of the present Bagmati Zone.

At present, much of the soldiers' initial élan has been lost. There is a feeling of frustration among them. This is partly because their low educational level and their inexperience in politics hamper them in competing with members of the higher Hindu castes for the key posts in the district administration, and partly because the district authorities are felt to be indifferent toward the problems which motivated the soldiers' actions. But in the villages, the soldiers' position is still uncontested. The presidents of many village *panchayats* in and around my fieldwork area are ex-soldiers, several of them Tamangs. Jang Bahadur, who was plenipotentiary officer for some time after the royal coup, is still a much respected organizer and dispute settler far beyond the boundaries of his village. In general, such activities as the building of a new school or of a *panchayat* office, the construction of a water pipe, or the introduction of fertilizers (unknown until 1970), would be unimaginable without the initiative of the soldiers; and whenever the notables (the village elite in a broader sense) convene, the soldiers take a leading part in decision making.

What happened to the traditional Tamang elite? Remarkably, the soldiers have not wholly supplanted the traditional elite. After crushing the initial resistance of the traditional elite, the soldiers rather encouraged the village headman and other functionaries of the old system to collaborate. This is clearly proven by the numerical majority of the members of the traditional elite among the notables. At present, in the Tamang villages of the area, about three-quarters of the notables are the traditional elite, that is, the old functionaries or their descendants. Only about one-quarter can be reckoned as belonging to the new elite, the core of which are the soldiers. (The proportion "three-quarters to one-quarter" is not quite exact, because two of the soldiers included in the sample are direct descendants of members of the traditional elite. It should also be added that among the one-quarter of the new elite there is a small minority of literate men with no army service. These men are young, self-educated, and experienced in interpreting the law and in issuing receipts, accounts, and other documents.)

2. What enabled the soldiers to assume leadership in so short a time? It is true that some of them returned home with large amounts of cash. This meant that they were in a position to start acting as moneylenders. In this way they secured a large number of followers among their debtors, mainly among the Tamangs. But the main reason for their swift rise lies in the particular historical situation which prevailed in the area just at the time of their return.

In the wake of the breakdown of the Rana regime in 1950, the load-carrying service and, somewhat later, the *birta* holdings were abolished. Thus, the traditional Tamang elite was deprived of its supporters and

some of its functions too. Consequently, this elite was disoriented and, as "henchmen of the exploiters," discredited in the eyes of the Tamangs. This created a vacuum which the soldiers' new elite was prepared to fill.

Abolition of the *birta* had another effect. As a consequence of the government's plan to abolish *birta* holdings (first announced in 1951, just one year after the end of the Rana regime), some of the *birta*-owners in the area stopped collecting taxes, while others stopped exacting forced labor as early as 1952. In 1955, the government imposed taxes on the *birta* which had been mostly tax-free; in 1957 forced labor was declared illegal; and in 1959 the *Birta* Abolition Act was promulgated. But, in spite of this development, the former *birta*-owners and other Brahmans and Chetris still had sufficient land and capital with which they could continue to exploit the Tamangs. This they did mainly as moneylenders. Roughly speaking, the effect of the *birta* abolition and of its precedents in 1952, 1955, and 1957 was neutralized. It was neutralized by the fact that, in the period following World War II, growing land scarcity, inefficient agricultural methods, and the appearance of new products of Indian origin at the local bazaars created an increasing demand for cash among the Tamangs. Even those Tamangs who hesitated to borrow money at usurious interest rates from the Brahmans and Chetris were compelled to work in the fields of the latter as sharecroppers or as simple laborers in order to meet their need for food. Rightly or not, the Tamangs hoped that the *birta* abolition could free them from their dependence. As they realized that this expectation was not to be fulfilled, the deception led to a growing discontent among them.

It is just at this time that the first soldiers came back from India. Because they were capable of articulating the interests of their fellow Tamangs, it was relatively easy for them to be accepted as leaders. Moreover, they had, from the beginning, a large base of support because the Tamangs were more or less united among themselves. The unity derived from two circumstances: first, the pressure came from "outside"; second, the Tamangs were no longer divided by factions since the position of the faction leaders, i.e., the members of the traditional elite, was weakened for the reasons mentioned above.

What enabled the soldiers to articulate the interests of the Tamangs was their experience in the army. In addition to the basic education which they had received there, they returned home with an "ideology" that, however nebulous it may have been in detail, gave them a common motivation in assuming leadership. Their slogans, such as "progress," "democracy," "freedom," or "justice for the poor," proved the influence which some concepts of the Indian Independence Movement had made upon them. The soldiers' exposure to these influences originated from the experience of certain contrasts (one is tempted to say "contradictions") between what they saw in India and what they knew awaited them at

home; for example, the contrast between their good treatment (as elite troops) in the army and their low status (along with economic and political dependence) as Tamangs in Nepal. This experience — a special kind of relative deprivation — has been explicitly stated by many of my informants. The contrast between the relative technical progress in India and the general "backwardness" of Nepal also highly impressed the soldiers. Soon they realized that a change of the traditional social order with its specific disadvantages for them as Tamangs was not possible without changing its economic context.

The present position of the soldiers, as the new core of the village elite, results from a compromise between a "rural" and a "national" orientation. Which of these facets — the "rural" or the "national" — appears in the foreground depends on the actual situation and on the interactional level. From the viewpoint of their social and economic background, the soldiers have remained villagers and Tamangs; whereas from the viewpoint of their ideological commitment and of their activities as leaders, they are Nepali citizens too. Again, while the "rural" facet of their orientation ensures the identification between them and their fellow Tamangs and, at the same time, distinguishes them from the mainly urban, half-Westernized cultural and administrational elite — the "national" facet of their orientation distinguishes them from their fellow Tamangs and, at the same time, creates a certain identity (not necessarily identification) between them and the half-Westernized elite. A detailed explanation of this follows.

The soldiers' access to education and to what I have called "ideology" was limited to a short period of time and did not alienate them from their social background at home. Not only do they feel themselves to be Tamangs, but they *are* Tamangs and are recognized as such. Like their fellow Tamangs, they are cultivators; they speak the same language, observe the same rites, and so forth. This explains, at least partly, why the soldiers did not supplant the traditional Tamang elite in their villages. It seems that the soldiers were neither able nor willing to risk a complete break with those traditional values upon which the authority of the functionaries of the old system rested and, to a certain extent, still rests. To these values belongs, *inter alia*, the belief that there is an intimate or mystic link between the person of the village headman (*mukhiya*) and the deities which are thought to be responsible for the fertility of the soil.

Of course, the hegemony of the new elite is uncontested — in spite of its numerical minority. This is not only because the soldiers' economic position is generally better than that of the members of the traditional elite; it is primarily because their authority — unlike the traditional elite — extends over the boundaries of the village. It does so because first, the soldiers are also leaders in the *panchayats* (each of which is always com-

prised of several villages) and, second, because they are educated; it is through them that the illiterate and inexperienced Tamangs can contact the district administration. A third factor which accounts for this "extension of authority" is the soldiers' prestige as regional leaders in the past. In contrast, the traditional elite's authority is, as it was in the past, confined to the village; the bulk of this elite is illiterate and does not hold any position in the village *panchayats.*

That the soldiers have remained Tamangs does not necessarily mean self-identification on purely ethnic grounds. On the contrary, their feeling of being Tamang is confined to their own community and kinship. Beyond these boundaries — and contrary to their fellow Tamangs — the soldiers view themselves, the Tamangs, and also their Hindu neighbors as parts of a greater society: the Nepalese nation. This national orientation, too, is a product of their experience in the army (cf. Pignède 1966:42–44) and, at the same time, one of the means of underlining their claim for emancipation from the traditional ethnic and caste statuses. It also may be seen in connection with the territorial extension of their authority, especially with their functions within the village *panchayats.* The *panchayat,* as a "supra-village" political unit, requires cooperation between the different castes and ethnic groups within its boundaries; and this cooperation is not possible without an appeal to unity on the basis of an overriding recruiting principle: the principle of being a Nepali citizen.

That the soldiers have remained villagers and Tamangs distinguishes them, as a village elite, from the half-Westernized elite in the urban centers and in the government administration. But, in spite of this distinction, there is a partly common basis, i.e., the national and "modernist" orientation linking the two elites. There are also loose personal ties between members of the two elites which serve as channels of communication. These ties derive from the same factors on which the above-mentioned "extension of authority" rests: the soldiers' role in the past, their education, and their position in the village *panchayats.*

Thus, the soldiers may be seen as an "intermediate" elite. Simultaneously, they seek identification with their rural society and visualize the necessity of changing this society. They are educated and are proponents of modernity with a certain ideological commitment, but still well integrated into their rural society and have, therefore, the confidence and loyalty of the villagers. This should not be overlooked at a time when economic and cultural discrepancies between the urban and the rural areas increasingly alienate the half-Westernized elite, which constitutes the core of the government administration, from the village population.

3. I have been speaking about the situation in and around my fieldwork area. The regional limitation of my study does not allow for far-reaching conclusions, and I am aware that more comparative data are needed in

order to validate my preliminary statements. Irrespective of the particular role that ex-soldiers may play or might have played in the recent history of other parts of Nepal, I would like to conclude with a question regarding the future: How far will the ex-soldiers further the integration of ethnic minorities into Nepalese society?[2]

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[2] An official pamphlet praises the ex-soldiers as "the most innovative and progressive elements of rural Nepal" (Ministry of Information and Broadcasting 1970:44). That the government has been trying to further (and to control) the political participation of this group is also shown by the fact that the Ex-soldiers' Organization is one of the "class organizations" (the others are: the Youth's, the Women's the Peasants', and the Workers' Organizations) within the present Panchayat System in Nepal.

Nepalis in Tibet

DOR BAHADUR BISTA

To the countries adjacent to it, including Nepal to the south, Tibet has never been the closed and mysterious land it has characteristically been for more distant peoples, particularly Westerners. In fact, the entire social, cultural, and economic history of Tibet is inextricably bound up with that of its neighbors. Until the beginning of the nineteenth century, Nepal shared greater cultural affinity with, and had greater economic interest in, Tibet than India. There were more Nepalis in Tibet than anywhere else outside Nepal; and there were more people of Tibetan than of Indian origin in Nepal. Prior to the nineteenth century, stronger ethnic and linguistic connections existed between Nepal and Central Asia than between Nepal and South Asia.

When we speak of the presence of Nepalis in Tibet, we must do so with this historical background in mind. The first two sections of this paper, therefore, will attempt to set the historical stage for the concluding discussion on Nepalis in the Tibet Autonomous Region of the People's Republic of China today. I will try to redress the imbalance brought about by so many one-sided views of Tibet as portrayed in the Western press as well as among misinformed Nepalis themselves.

THE EARLY DAYS

Before Europe knew or cared much about the Himalayan area, the inhabitants of the region traveled into each others' territories frequently and freely for a variety of purposes. The fact that most of the Himalayan region is traditionally populated by people who speak Tibeto-Burman languages and who have Mongoloid physical features is evident. For Nepalis, travel and interaction with the south was difficult and dangerous

compared to travel towards the north, at least until the nineteenth century. The dense, subtropical forest to the south, with its diseases, wild animals, and all kinds of evil spirits, demons, monsters, dacoits and robbers was not considered by any means safe and secure. By contrast the journeys to the north, although certainly physically demanding, were pleasant and rewarding. Even the Indo-European-speaking non-Mongoloid Khas, who are more closely related to the Thakuris and Chetris of today than others and who live in the western Himalayas, traveled more to the north than to the south. The relative ignorance of the north Indian culture and religion among the Indo-European speaking non-Mongoloid Khas of the upper Karnali basin in western Nepal, even at the present time, reflects this situation.

The economic interdependence of these people with Tibet is very significant even today. The close cultural and economic contact of people from the Kathmandu Valley and areas around it with Tibet is, of course, well known. But even though not as well known, contacts of the people in the Himalayas along the northern border are not much less significant, nor could the safety valve that is provided by the southern slopes and valleys of the Himalayas for Tibetan populations from the very early days right down to the second half of the twentieth century be easily dismissed (cf. Fürer-Haimendorf 1964, 1975).

The Vedic people from north India regarded the land beyond the Himalayas as holy, the land of the gods. The origin of the name Tibet itself is derived from the Vedic expression "Tribistapa" (heaven). People of Tibet or of Nepal for that matter do not use the English word "Tibet," but rather "Böd" in Tibetan, or "Bhot" in Nepali. But the ancient Hindus made many references to Tibet. The Mahabharata, for example, mentions Bhimsen's trip to Tibet for the purpose of borrowing gold to use during the battle of Kurukshetra. At the end, all the five Pandava brothers and Draupadi, their consort, traveled to the north on their final journey. It is an interesting cultural coincidence that the Pandava brothers had a polyandrous marriage with their common wife, Draupadi, a practice commonly followed in Tibet.

Even the father of historiography, Herodotus, mentions people from the Himalayas going to Tibet to steal gold. Writing obviously from hearsay, more than 2,400 years ago, Herodotus said that "a tribe dwelling northward of all the rest of the Indians . . . shorter in stature and size . . . more warlike than any of the other tribes sends forth its men to steal" the gold . . . [When they reach the gold] . . . "they fill their bags with sand and ride away at their best speed" (MacGregor 1970:259).

Because there is little recorded history about the relationship between Nepal and Tibet before the seventh century, it is rather difficult to state the exact nature of its contacts with surrounding regions. Scholars lament the situation when they make remarks like "another neighboring country

with which Tibet has been brought into closer contact than with India, is Nepal, and here again we find ourselves on equally barren ground" (Li 1960). David Snellgrove and Hugh Richardson considered that "The main influences continued to be China in the east and Nepal in Central Tibet . . . Relations with Nepal were very ancient indeed, but it was not until about 1590 that there is any mention of a formal treaty between the two countries" (1968:201). They state further that ". . . it is fairly certain that there were already trading connections between Nepal and Tibet long before the Tibetans became a recognized political power . . . once we enter an historical period, Nepal begins to become a kind of half-way house between Tibet and central India." (Ibid. 1968:26)

The all time renowned Professor Tucci has put in more succinct remarks:

> Because of her prolonged relations with Tibet, Nepal was destined to leave a lasting imprint on Tibetan art. The manuscripts, often illuminated, which the abbots of the great monasteries, particularly the Sakya-pas, had copied; and the welcome extended to Nepalese artists, who enjoyed great fame in Tibet, gave rise to the Nepalese style; and this long dominated the development of Tibetan painting, especially that of Ü and Tsang. Indeed, the renown of Nepalese artists was such that even the Mongol emperors asked for their work to embellish the temples and palaces they were building. One such artist (of whom the Chinese chronicles also tell us) was the seventeen year old Aniko who, with twenty-four colleagues, went to China on Phakpa's advice.
>
> One gathers from biographies of the more famous founder abbots that Nepalese craftsmen were often brought in to paint the newly-built walls in fresco; in some cases the actual names of the artists are recorded, as in the case of those who decorated the Lhakhang built by the founder of the Ngor sect, Kunga-Sangpo (1382–1444). (Tucci 1967:100).

There is an interesting ancient cult of Bhimsen among the Newars of Nepal. Naturally, the mention of Bhimsen's name reminds us of the Mahabharata in the context of north India. But this Bhimsen of the Newars does not seem to have very much to do with the battle of Kurukshetra, the Kauravas, the remaining brothers among the Pandavas nor indeed anything else connected with the epic at least for the purpose we are considering here. Among other things, one interesting facet of this cult is that every twelve years a living "Bhimsen" from among the pujaris of Bhimsen's shrine in Kathmandu travels to Lhasa, as the representative of the deity and collects some gold before his return. Formerly the Tibetan government had to give a certain amount of gold to him. The last Bhimsen visit took place in 1967–1968. The Lhasa Branch of the People's Bank of China allowed a certain amount of gold to be cashed at the official rate, thus maintaining the tradition at that time. I have not yet had an opportunity to discover additional details of this tradition. The origins of these cultural connections are buried in prehistory and mythology. There are, however, records of contact from the second quarter of the seventh century onwards.

Discussing cultural contacts between Nepal and Tibet, Norbu and Turnbull write that Srontsan Gampo, the first historic King of Tibet, recognized the value of a political marriage and allied himself first with Nepal by marrying its princess. "The Princess Bhrikuti was a devout Buddhist who brought with her as part of her dowry several valuable Buddhist images" at the time of her marriage. The Tsulag Khang, "which stands today in the middle of the city of Lhasa that has grown up around it" was built to house the images. "Nepalese architects and builders and all the necessary craftsmen were sent from Nepal for the work on the temple, the first to be built in Tibet" (Norbu and Turnbull 1968:141). They go on to say that, "In his negotiations with the King of Nepal for the hand of Bhrikuti, Srontsan Gampo had stated quite plainly that he was not a Buddhist, and did not practice the ten virtues, but that if the King so desired he would adopt the ten virtues and would further the cause of Buddhism with all his might" (1968:141).

Norbu and Turnbull also mention that with the coming of Buddhism, Tibetan religious art and writing "took on a distinctive style derived from the art of schools of India and Nepal, though in eastern Tibet the style is markedly Chinese" (1968:330).

It is also believed that along with the religious and cultural contacts maintained throughout the period there were political and military alliances as well.

During the following century Tibet suffered a setback in its development of Buddhism. It was from Nepal that the famous monk Shanta Rakshita and, subsequently, Padma Sambhava, were invited into Tibet to reestablish the religious faith. There is, however, a great deal of confusion about the place of origin of Padma Sambhava and even about the historicity of his being. But that need not distract us from the main thesis of our discussion. Whether Padma Sambhava was a historic figure or just an embodiment of a movement, the fact remains that Nepal was the source of contact, and Nepali monks along with the traders, craftsmen, masons, builders, etc., were the chief agents working actively in the early years to build up the so-called Tibetan civilization. Stein makes a similar point when he says that the Tibetan king of the eighth century "brought the Buddhist monk Shantā Rakshitā from Nepal and was ordained a monk by him with the religious name of Yeshe Wang-Po. It was in Nepal again that he is said to have met the famous saint Padma Sambhava who became the patron of the non-reformed orders of Tibet" (R. A. Stein 1972:66).

Up until the thirteenth century when Aniko, the famous Nepali architect, traveled with his band of workers and assistants from Nepal to Lhasa and ultimately to Peking where he built temples and monuments of considerable renown, Nepalis maintained very good relations at the highest artistic levels in addition to the trade that had always been one of the most important channels of intercourse between the two peoples. It

was, however, with the beginning of the religious reform movement of Je Tsong Khapa (1357–1419) and his Gelugpa (Yellow Hat sect) that religious and cultural relations with Nepal were gradually pushed to the periphery. Trade and commerce began to predominate the official relationship from then on. Traditional religious and cultural ties with a definite emphasis on spiritual values began to be overshadowed by material concerns reflected in trade and commerce, although cultural ties were not altogether neglected. One other quote from Tucci will have to tell us that: "the custom of patronizing well-known Nepalese artists never lapsed; the fifth Dalai Lama kept it up and his biography cites several names under the year 1659" (Tucci 1967:100).

THE COLONIAL SHADOWS

As the British East India Company consolidated its hold on the South Asian subcontinent during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, Nepal's behavior toward her own neighbors also began naturally to be preoccupied with the maximization, or at least the preservation, of her own political and economic interests. This period represents, for Nepal, a decisive shift away from a concentration on religious and cultural matters because of the obvious threat presented by the British. Nepal's policy towards Tibet, therefore, was also affected.

The competition between Nepal and the British government to expand trade into Tibet during the eighteenth century can be clearly perceived in the reports of George Bogle, the first British officer ever to visit Tibet as the representative of the Governor General in Bengal, Warren Hastings (Markham 1971). Although Bogle reports that Nepal's misbehavior had antagonized the Tibetan authorities, thus presenting the British with an opportunity to exert their influence in the area, one is led to conclude that in fact both Tibet and Nepal were still considered much closer to each other, and the Panchen Lama's polite behavior towards Bogle was only a matter of courtesy. Bogle, for example, in one of his dispatches to the Governor General after his audience in Shigatse with the Panchen Lama on January 19, 1775, reported that the King of Nepal had written to Tibetan authorities that he wanted to establish factories at locations

> . . . upon the borders of Tibet and Nepal, where the merchants of Tibet might purchase the commodities of his country and those common articles of commerce to be transported through his kingdom, but no glasses or other curiosities, and desired them to prohibit the importation of them also; that he desired them further to have no connection with Fringies[1] or Moghuls, and not to admit them into the country, but to follow the ancient custom, which he was resolved likewise

[1] British people were referred to as "Fringie," originally the term used by the Portuguese in India.

to do; that a Fringie had come to him upon some business, and was now in his country, but he intended to send him back as soon as possible, and desired them to do the same with us; that he had written also about circulating his coin, and had sent 2000 rupees for that purpose . . . The Lama did not at this time desire my opinion upon the Gorkha Rajah's letter, and I made no remarks upon the subject (Markham 1971:158).

Elsewhere he reports a letter which his host the Lama wrote to the King of Nepal, requesting him to "allow all merchants, as Hindus, Mussulmans, and the four castes, to go and come, and carry on their trade freely" (Markham 1971:198). Markham summarizes the situation as follows: "A flourishing trade was carried on between Tibet and the plains of India, through the passes of Nepal . . . The Kashmiri merchants carried their goods by Ladak to Kuti, at the head of the pass, to procure wool; their manufactures went thence partly for use in Tibet, partly to China by Sining, and partly to Patna by the valley of Nepal. Tibetan merchants brought woolen cloths, ponies, shawl goats, yaks, sheep, musk, salt, borax, gold, silver, and paper to Kathmandu, and the lamas sent much bullion to the Nepal mints" (1971:liv).

This situation continued in spite of the sporadic efforts of the British, as was their policy at that time, to try to drive a wedge into any cleavage that might develop between Tibet and Nepal.

There were other European visitors to Tibet who knew about China and India but who were completely ignorant of even the existence of Nepal. One such visitor to Lhasa during the middle of the nineteenth century was Huc. He describes the presence of the Nepalese population, thinking all the time that they were Indians. "Among the foreigners who constitute part of the fixed population of Lhasa, the Pebouns[2] (pronounced as "Pebou") are the most numerous. They are Indians from Butan" (Huc 1852:251). He did not know that it is only to the Nepalis that the Tibetans refer as "Pebou." The Indians are called by the Tibetans as "Gya-kar," the Bhutanese, as "Drukpa"; the Sikkimese, as "Denjong"; the Mongols, as "Sök-po."

Huc lets us know more about the Nepalese when he continues:

> The Pebouns are the only workers in metal in Tibet, and in their quarters must be sought the smiths, braziers, tinmen, plumbers, goldsmiths, as well as the physicians and chymists [sic] . . . The Pebouns fabricate vases of gold and silver, and ornaments of all kind for the use of the Lama Convents. It is they also who furnish the beautiful gilt plates for the temple, which resist so well the inclemency of the seasons, preserving unimpaired their first freshness and brilliancy. The Pebouns are also the dyers of Lha-sa; their colours are durable as well as vivid; the stuffs wear out but never discolour (Huc 1852:251).

[2] Huc not being quite familiar with the Tibetan tones may have heard a slightly nazalized ending, hence the "n". I prefer to leave "n" out, the way it is pronounced in Tibet.

Huc goes on to describe the nature of the people themselves: "These people are extremely jovial and childlike in temper, like children laughing and frolicking in their hours of relaxation, and singing continually over their work. Their religion is Indian Buddhism"; he does not know that there was not much Buddhism in India at the time, and he continues "but they show great respect nevertheless for the reform of Tsong Kaba, and never fail on days of grand solemnity to prostrate themselves at the feet of the Buddha-La and offer their adorations to the Tale Lama" (Huc 1852:251–252).

It is interesting that about three-quarters of a century later the British resident representative in Lhasa, Sir Charles Bell, who has also given one of the most impressive accounts of Tibet, thought that the Nepalese in Lhasa were not, as a rule, on good terms with the Tibetans. At the time he reported that there was a large colony of Nepalese in Lhasa and smaller colonies in Tse-tang, Shigatse, Gyantse, Lhatse, and at places in the province of Kongpol (Bell 1928:118).

But Sir Charles Bell appears more charitable and understanding of Nepal's position when he says: "After the expedition of 1904 when the road was extended through the length of the Chumbi Valley to Phari and Gyantse . . . Nepal's trade with Tibet has thereby suffered great injury, a fact which we should appreciate all the more when we remember the large measure of assistance which she gave us in the latter expedition: . . . The 1904 expedition also opened up direct dealings between British and Tibetans, and this has reacted unfavourably on Nepal, which had at times played the part of an intermediary between the two, and had enjoyed the advantages with which such a position endowed her. Nepal in fact on that occasion helped us towards a result which has worked to her own detriment" (1928:233–234).

Although the noted British authorities were always very quick to see any misunderstanding or differences between the Nepalis and the Tibetans, they were also quick to see, as during the British expedition the leader himself saw, that "the concrete evidence that the Nepalese were on the British side would have a great effect on the Tibetans" (MacGregor, 1970:318). One other interesting observation has been made by Amaury de Riencourt. "A thorn in Tibet's side" he says "was Nepal." He asserts that "Relations between both countries had never been good. Though there are many Buddhists in Nepal, the Gurkhas are mainly Hindus, very proud of their military traditions and contemptuous of pacifists — Tibetans, Indians and Chinese alike. Incidents always occurred along their mutual border in spite of British efforts to settle their disputes and since the Maharaja of Nepal's refusal to help him during his exile in India, the Inmost One (Dalai Lama) had felt a deep hostility toward the Gurkhas. But Nepal, though unpleasant, was a small country; it could hardly threaten the roof of the world" (Riencourt 1950:180–181). Although

these kinds of remarks display an ethnocentric attitude and an air of condescension there is a certain amount of truth in depicting the attitude of at least the courtiers and the rulers of Nepal for the particular period he talks about. One thing we do not know, and which is not often discussed, is how much Nepali behavior, chrystalized during the past couple of centuries, was in fact a result of the entire colonial-imperial context in Asia; how much of it was the mimicry of the influential and prestigious powers.

It was obviously in the best interests of the British in India to see Nepal /Tibet relations remain less than cordial. And it made perfectly good sense to dig up all the differences that existed and nurture them. Therefore both the Tibetans and the Nepalis received all possible pressures from the British, who tried to achieve their goals at any cost, while China was too weak to do very much about it. Nevertheless it was outrageous for the Nepal government to have assisted and escorted the British armed mission when finally it forced its way to Lhasa in 1904. It was extremely unfair to the Tibetans, particularly since a treaty existed between Nepal and Tibet at this time. According to this treaty Nepal would be expected to fight for the Tibetans whenever necessary. Article 2 of the 1856 treaty between Nepal and Tibet specifically mentioned that, "Tibet being the country of monasteries, hermits and celibates, devoted to religion, the Gurkha Government have agreed henceforth to afford help and protection to it as far as they can, if any foreign country attacks it" (Sir Charles Bell 1968:278–279).

It is certainly understandable that the Tibetans would ultimately lose all faith and trust in the Nepali government after this. Therefore all the gossip of Sir Charles Bell about the Tibetan officials being wary, distrustful, and suspicious of the Nepalis becomes a needless tautology at best. Nepalis had already slipped to an untrustworthy low in the eyes of the Tibetans. Nepal on the other hand did not care very much what the Tibetans thought about them any longer. For the glamor, the radiance, and more importantly the threat of the British Empire was too overwhelming. Hundreds of thousands of Nepali youths were serving either in the British Army or engaged in other economic activities in different parts of the empire. Nepal, although politically independent, had become virtually an economic subordinate to the Empire by the turn of the century and certainly after World War I.

In time, the Nepali traders in Tibet were no longer trading much in Nepali goods. After the opening of the Sikkim route all the Nepali traders diverted their trade to the commerce between Bengal and Tibet. There was very little trade opportunity for Nepal. As the Nepali elites of the day began to seek education under the British system in India, which subsequently was extended to Kathmandu, the Nepal Government almost completely ignored Tibet, forgot the traditional ties, and neglected the

commitments made earlier as the education system discouraged learning the history of one's own country and the true nature of its relations with the neighboring countries. This was especially true when Nepal was governed by individuals who were concerned exclusively with their own personal interests almost to the total exclusion of any larger national interests.

Although political relations at these higher levels atrophied, the peoples of the two countries, nonetheless, continued their intercourse much as they always had. Thus, relations between Nepal and Tibet, which began deep in the hoary past, have continued to this day regardless of the ups and downs of political and state level relations.

A peculiar demographic fact of the situation is that all the Nepalis who went to Tibet were males, with no females whatsoever. Many men, therefore, took local Tibetan wives once they were there. Thus, the Nepalis from mixed marriages in Tibet were exclusively from Tibetan mothers and Nepali fathers. Subsequent generations, however, could have had both parents as born-in-Tibet Nepalis. Therefore, in the course of time a large number of people of either sex who claimed to be Nepali citizens spoke only Tibetan and had never in their lifetime even visited Nepal.

Newari-speaking people have always maintained a number of *guthis* — a kind of religious corporation or guild through which a strong group cohesiveness is maintained. They followed the same tradition in Lhasa. Since ritual and commensal purity used to be a preoccupation of those Nepalis who went to Tibet, they were very careful to form their own exclusive *guthi* organizations there. There were about a dozen such operative *guthis* among the Nepalis of Lhasa alone. Each one of them had its own patron deities, lots of ornaments, jewelry, ritual texts, pots and pans and dishes for holding big feasts, etc. Interestingly enough they did not allow their own children from Tibetan wives to join any of these *guthis*. Therefore the Nepalis born in Tibet formed their own *guthis*, following the tradition of their fathers. This made for a strict economic and social division based primarily on the legitimacy of ritual status.

The Tibetan-born Nepalis remained either small peasant farmers, cattle or sheep breeders, or wage earners, while the Nepal-born Nepalis invariably remained traders and shopkeepers. Not all of them were rich or successful, but this system certainly excluded any Tibetan-born Nepali from being a successful trader. The traditional law of inheritance among the Nepalis did not allow any of them to inherit much of the property left behind by the Nepal-born merchants. The property went to the legitimate collateral descendants living in Nepal rather than to the direct descendants of the deceased living together in a family in Tibet.

This was the main reason why many of these people with mixed parentage chose to accept Chinese citizenship rather than Nepalese when

they were given the choice for the first time in 1960–1962. But since then the Chinese officials have given equal opportunities for trade transactions of both types of Nepalis, regardless of whether they were born in Nepal of Nepali mothers or born in Tibet of Tibetan mothers.

In the meantime Nepal's law of inheritance also has changed to give equal rights for parental property children born of the same fathers regardless of the mother's ritual status. This has made a big difference in the contemporary composition of the Nepali population in Tibet. One basic difference, of course, is in the number of Nepalis born in Tibet. This population has decreased from hundreds to a few dozen and only a few of them are successful traders. But this aspect will be discussed further in the next section.

THE RECENT SITUATION

In 1974, the Nepali population in Lhasa proper was about 350, with about fifteen in the suburban villages, seventy in Shigatse, only one in Gyantze, and seventy-five in Yatung. Of these, about twenty were from the Kathmandu Valley, living temporarily in Lhasa, and the same number were born in different parts of Nepal outside of Kathmandu. The others were born in Tibet either of mixed parentage or mixed ancestry of a few generations maintaining Nepali lineage. The total number of Nepalis residing in Tibet at the time Sir Charles Bell visited Lhasa in 1920 was 600–700 Newars and over 1,000 persons of mixed parentage (Bell 1924: 233).

According to an agreement between the two governments, people with mixed origin were given a choice of citizenship in 1962. Those who opted for Nepali citizenship were given Nepali passports; many others opted for Chinese citizenship. Thus, the people were formally and clearly aligned on two sides for the first time in history.

A majority of Tibetan-born Nepalis of mixed origin in 1974 were wage earners; a few were farmers; one or two, livestock herdsmen; about thirty-five ran small retail shops; fourteen of them owned and drove horsecarts; and about a dozen carried on international trade between the two countries under government license.

The majority of them were illiterate, and the remainder were barely literate with very little understanding of modern government, the international situation, and of international trade. At the time, in Lhasa there was only one Nepali trader who was educated to some degree and was, therefore, aware of the world outside and had some knowledge of international trade. He was trusted by the authorities in both Lhasa and Kathmandu because he was one of the few individuals who could be trusted at all levels of behavior. There was one other reputable firm

which was still doing some trade although much less than in the past. These few traders were doing relatively well although not all of them had had much education. There were a few individuals of mixed parentage who had apparently opted for Chinese citizenship in 1962 but for some reason had changed their minds afterwards and decided to apply for Nepali citizenship. One difficult case to decide was still pending as of 1974.

Remnants of Nepali institutions remain but are dwindling. There is a primary school for Nepali children at Lhasa with an enrollment fluctuating between forty and eighty. Nepali textbooks are brought from Kathmandu and the teachers are appointed by the Royal Nepali Consulate. The *thakali* (elderman) system of the older days was nonfunctional by this time. He did not have to interpret for or represent the Nepalis since each of them could approach the office personally whenever necessary and not through the *thakali* as had been the practice in the past. Because the majority of Nepalis in Tibet were born in Tibet, most of them do not speak Nepali and have not even been to Nepal.

As described above, Nepalis in Lhasa had, through the centuries of their residence there, developed the *guthi* system of worship, feasts, and picnics, as had been their style at home in Nepal. But by 1974 all the *guthis* had become defunct. The only practice still prevalent was that of "Saraswati puja" on the fifth day of the bright fortnight of the lunar month of Phalgun (during the latter part of January). A shrine, known as "kamakusha" (or Saraswati) is maintained by the Nepalis on the eastern outskirts of Lhasa, which is more or less neglected throughout the year. It is cleaned up and maintained once a year just for the purpose of that particular day when the Nepalis visit the shrine, picnic, and rejoice for the day.

In order to give a fuller understanding of present-day Nepali populations in Lhasa, I will present a few case studies here. These were all recorded during 1974.

Case Study One

A few miles west of Lhasa proper and over the hill lives a family consisting of a husband, wife, and two children, all of whom carry Nepali passports. They often come to the Nepali Consulate and request assistance in settling in Lhasa proper. They know that if they come without the prior approval of the authorities, they will not receive their ration card, and everyone knows that it is pretty expensive to live there without a ration card. The head of the family says that he is a *drokpa* [nomad] and that he has no land. His entire family is forced to make a living from sixteen yaks and five sheep. He pleads that the number of his livestock is not adequate

and therefore living is very hard for him and his family although he has a permanent house to live in. This man and his wife look quite healthy and well fed. They are dressed in warm, heavy woolen clothes in the traditional Tibetan style. Therefore, it is difficult to believe everything he says; one has learned from experience that the method of argument used here is to apply pressure and to insist rather than reason logically. When told that Lhasa will not provide them with a more comfortable living than they have in the pasture area, the man insists that they will make a living by working on building sites as laborers. There are quite a few building projects in Lhasa that employ Nepalis of mixed parentage. Is this a better way to make a living than being a herdsman in a suburb of Lhasa? The man is not sure so he changes the subject. He, with his wife and children, would like to return to Nepal. Upon inquiry he admits that he has never been anywhere outside Tibet. He has no relatives or acquaintances in Nepal and has no savings to establish himself there initially. Neither he nor any of his family speak a word of Nepali. They do not know who their ancestors were. Finally, he agrees that his return to Nepal would be even harder for him. He takes leave with a grin.

The next time he shows up at the consulate is six months after his first visit, and he repeats the same requests. He is advised to try at the Lhasa Foreign Bureau for permission to move to Lhasa. He agrees and leaves. After a few months he returns to the consulate and reports that he has surrendered his yaks and sheep to the collective. So presently he has no other problem except that he owes some money to some of his relatives. He wants to borrow 100 yuan from the consulate. All things considered, it does not look as though he will be able to or be inclined to repay the money. So he is given sixty yuan out of the Social Welfare Fund for Nepalis as an outright gift and he is happy when he leaves.

Case Study Two

There are a few Nepali families living in a village about a day's journey north of Lhasa proper. One healthy and decent looking young man in modern Chinese work clothes turned up at the consulate one morning. He complained that his cow had been forcibly taken by another man in the village and he had no redress. When asked to clarify his story further, he related a tale of how he had tethered his cow on a peg by the side of his house; how the honking and roaring noise of an automobile on the road passing the village had frightened the cow; how the cow had broken the lead and run away; how it had reached the green field of his neighbor; how he had approached the neighbor with apologies and with promises to compensate him for the loss of his green crops in the field; how his

neighbor had turned a deaf ear to all of his petitions in spite of his willingness to compensate his loss.

This could not be the entire story. There must be other incidents in the village which led to misunderstandings with the petitioner, I thought. And after further enquiries he divulged the other part of the story. His village had been turned into a commune and all the land had been converted into communal land except his own. He owned thirteen separate pieces of land where he worked with his family independently. The village authorities had tried to convince him to accommodate himself and his property to the commune. He did not want to do this since it was not obligatory for him as a Nepali citizen to do so. He also said that he had a few Chinese citizens living in a joint household with him who were entitled to a share of the common property. They were his mother, sister, and a couple of in-laws. This made things awkward. As a result the members of the household were not allowed to use the water from the communal canal to irrigate their land. So he had not been able to sow his field. He argued: how could he produce crops which he had to pay as tax? He was advised to seek an accommodation with other members of the village and report to the authorities if there were any real injustices. Subsequently, he went to the "Chike Lekun," the foreign office under the Lhasa Municipality, that dealt with all the Nepalis except the consulate staff, and received a piece of paper ordering the release of his cow. He came to report this to the consulate but still asserted that he would rather return to Nepal. It was explained to him that Nepal is not a safe haven for irregular behavior. There are laws to abide by in any country. So he might reconsider the whole thing and make up his mind. The consulate would help him whenever needed. He came on several occasions thereafter but with different problems to discuss. Many of these types of problems came from the mixed families, where half the members were Nepali citizens and the other half Tibetan Chinese.

Case Study Three

One afternoon a group of five men called on me and introduced themselves as horsecart drivers. All except one had married Chinese-Tibetan women. The fifth had a Nepali-Tibetan wife. They said they did not come to the consulate frequently during the past couple of years. The reason they gave was that "only the rich and selfish among the Lhasa Nepalis had influence there." People like themselves who had neither wealth nor influence were treated with contempt and indifference. But the situation had changed, as they realized, and they were encouraged to come and state their problems. Their problem was some sort of insurance against cart accidents, guarantee of their possessions, and the future security of

their children. I promised to represent their case to the local authorities in Lhasa.

After this they dropped into the consulate more frequently. Their leader, who spoke fluent Nepali and made a regular habit of casually calling, gradually began to talk more about himself.

His father was a *jyapu* [farmer] from Kathmandu, and his mother a Tibetan; both of them were dead. His wife is a Khamba who had begged her way from Kham to Lhasa. He was a very poor man living on daily wages all the time in old Tibet. Since 1959 his condition had improved considerably. Now he owned two carts and four ponies, all of which were worth 10,000 yuan or about $5,000. He made a good living with his horsecarts and had savings as well. He was financing the education of his oldest son who was fifteen in one of the best known boarding schools in Kathmandu. He had a private chapel in his Lhasa house where he had a number of idols as well as *thankas* and burned lamps every day and offered water in silver bowls. The Lhasa authorities visited his house frequently and did not object to his religious practices.

At a later date, he reported that he surrendered some of his gold and musk, which he had illegally procured some time ago as so many other people did, to the local authorities. He was then paid an official price, and he was advised to tell other Nepalis of this transaction and not to repeat this type of activity again.

Until recently, he was allowed by the Lhasa authorities to remit twenty pounds sterling every month like so many other Nepalis who were making an honest living. Incidentally, the problem actually was not one of the remittance but of convertible currency; Nepal and China do not have an official and fixed exchange rate. He said that this was then misused by smugglers and blackmarketeers to convert black money by bribing simple people to sell their money orders. When this was made known to the authorities the privilege was withdrawn. So he still had the problem of remittance. Subsequently this privilege was resumed for those Nepalis who were making money on trade, business, and other straight earnings.

At one time when asked what his Tibetan neighbors thought about the Nepalis in town, he answered, "As far as I know, in our block, we have a very natural and normal relationship." And he added, "We work together and help each other at times when occasion arises. We Nepalis are not discriminated against. The Tibetan authorities of the block offer us help willingly whenever we need it." He added, after a few seconds, "The higher authorities always seem to make sure that the Nepalis get jobs, and are treated fairly and reasonably at all times." After a few more seconds he concluded "This was not quite the case for the past couple of years, we are having a much better time now."

Case Study Four

There was a man in his late fifties, a very old Nepali hand, who hung around the consulate for a few days when I first arrived in Lhasa. He was a Shrestha and came from Patan in Nepal. Every time he came in he began talking and continued automatically as long as he stayed. He was never coherent or sensitive to any reactions. He talked of Buddhas, future Buddhas, and of musk for a few minutes. Then he would give the amount of the bribes he had given to some former officials of the consulate. Next he would get excited and act out how he had boldly argued with the authorities in Lhasa. Then he would say he had been treated very well by the Chinese. Then he would switch topics to the state of religion, idols, *thankas*, silver bullion, and his wife back home in Nepal. He said there were some dishonest people in the consulate who bothered him. He did not mind bribing honest people, but he could not stand the dishonest. He was known to be the richest Nepali in Lhasa in terms of ownership of movable property. Therefore he did not mind distributing some of it because he expected it back in the next life. He suggested that he could consider any of the needs of the consulate official very favorably. The only problem he had was of his Tibetan-born Nepali wife in Lhasa. She spied on him all the time and reported everything, including his love affair with another woman. He wanted to marry the latter but the authorities did not endorse her Nepali citizenship. He expected the consul general to have courage and dignity as a representative of Nepal, the land of gods, and assist his mistress in getting Nepali citizenship, for she after all did have a Nepali as a distant ancestor. All the former officials who had represented him had profited from him. So there was no reason why the present ones should not. Besides God had predetermined everything, and had done everything. None of us should feel proud of our actions. To be sure, when he said "God," he meant "Buddha" and no one else. All the Hindu gods were the servants of Buddha. Before he got up to leave the room he said, "By the way, the thing I hate most is the visitors' book at the gate where I have to write my name and the purpose and time of my visit at the entrance. Never before in the history of Lhasa has there been a Nepali consulate where you have had to report at the gate in such an insulting manner."

At the end of one such session I told him that he need not take the trouble to come to the consulate anymore because I did not think I could do much to help him. He was enraged, he trembled and warned me in strong language, "Watch out! I have many strings that I can pull in Kathmandu including the ones in your own Foreign Ministry."

He remained a frequent visitor off and on and I learned not to take him seriously. He died of heart failure after about two years, leaving all his property and problems behind. Subsequently, his property was divided

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between his two surviving wives, one from Patan and the other from Tibet, with the help of the Nepali Consulate and the Lhasa authorities.

Case Study Five

Once I chanced to ask a Nepal-born Nepali trader what he thought about the attitude of the Tibetans towards Nepalis in general. I was just curious whether lay Tibetans had any feelings different from those of the authorities. According to his observations, the younger people did not have much opinion one way or another. They did not care much. But the older ones, he remarked, say "*Ning Che.*" "What does that mean?" I asked. "Oh," he said, "that means that they are sorry for us. One old man said to me the other day '*Ning Che Buddha*!' " [poor Buddha!]. "Why was that?" I was still curious. "My full name is Buddha Ratna Sakya, but they just call me 'Buddha'." "I see. But why were you pitied by your old Tibetan friend?" "You probably don't know much of old Tibet," he began with a long breath, and as an afterthought he added: "As a matter of fact I do not know much either myself, since I came here for the first time in 1965." Then he went on to explain that in the old days most of the Nepalis who came to Lhasa made lots of money easily and quickly. They were then addressed with the respectful term "*Sota La*" by everybody. The Nepalis became bankers, jewelers, traders, order suppliers, and — no less significant — also became attractive to Tibetan girls. But everything had changed since different commodities now were supplied by the state itself. There are large department stores where all consumer goods are available at very fair and reasonable prices. There is a modern bank to take care of the financial transactions and also there are stricter laws of marriage. There are no rich Tibetan women to wear expensive jewelry. "So" he continued, "you can see that it is just not possible to get rich quick as in the old days. And this change has been clearly observed by the older people, although the young are not aware of much of the past."

The fact that only the urban based skilled craftsmen and experienced people in business and various types of trade went to Tibet to make a living made all the difference in the general image of Nepalis in Tibet as opposed to those in Bihar, West Bengal, and Uttar Pradesh in India, where mostly unskilled wage earners from rural Nepal went to work as cheap labor.

The picture at present is changing very rapidly of course in both directions. Both skilled and unskilled labor is being attracted to Nepal from across the southern border. The migration pattern across the northern border is also very different now. There is only a trickle of movement on both sides of the Himalayan border.

There are only about a dozen Nepal-born Nepalis in Lhasa at present.

The number of Tibetan-born Nepalis is considerably higher of course. And a great majority of them are wage earning urban laborers.

Case Study Six

There was another trader from Kathmandu who had never been in trouble since he had arrived in Lhasa. He had gone to Lhasa in 1945 as an employee of one of the biggest Nepali trading firms in Lhasa. He journeyed back and forth between Calcutta and Lhasa for a few years and finally settled down to his own business in 1960. He did not have much capital to begin with. He had started with the humble background of a small business in Kathmandu. He had some education and some experience with trade. Yet he had only this experience and honest effort in his favor. The authorities in Lhasa supported him and gave him opportunities to buy and sell with large profit margins. He said he did not quite understand the system in the beginning. So he hesitated and apologized for his inability to invest large sums of money as he did not have it. But this was no limitation, as the Lhasa authorities insisted he should just shoulder the weight and go along with them. The capital was no problem. He could make his payments only after he had finished the deal and made some profit. He did this with a great deal of uneasiness and misgiving. Less than fifteen years later he now deals with millions. He is grateful to everyone. He dropped in frequently at the consulate and discussed his business. He often said that the Nepali traders in Lhasa should have no problems. "Chinese officials have always been very generous and reasonable with us. As far as I am concerned, they have pulled me up and have lifted me from the street into my present status," he declared.

He is respected by most Nepalis in town, though a few from Kathmandu, who failed to get rich quickly, are jealous of him and do not mind talking against him. There are no more than six firms including his, which may continue to export and import. These traders are among the few who are sincerely grateful to the Lhasa authorities, our consulate, and to His Majesty's government policies on certain issues.

At one stage, I sought his advice on how to handle some Nepali citizens' claims for property and money they had lent some Tibetans. These Nepalis had approached the consulate and the foreign ministry for help. To this he said that no Nepali had ever gone to Tibet with a bagful of money. Invariably, they went there with empty bags and returned with full ones. Some had smaller bags and others bigger, but full they always were. During the process many Nepalis have either borrowed from or owed money to Tibetans. So if any claims of such properties are made, officially, the number of Nepalis having to return either property or money will be greater than the number of them receiving it. Thus, he

concluded, it is more profitable for you not to take any action. It was decided to follow his advice.

CONCLUSION

It is hoped that these case studies give some representative picture of the Nepali population in the Tibet Autonomous Region of the People's Republic of China. What happens to them in the future depends entirely upon how realistic both sides can be in dealing with them.

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Modernizing a Traditional Administrative System: Sikkim 1890–1973

LEO E. ROSE

Among the three Himalayan border kingdoms, Sikkim was the state with the longest history of programs directed at administrative modernization, predating similar efforts in Nepal and Bhutan by more than half a century. This was due to the fact that Sikkim, in contrast to its two Himalayan neighbors, came under direct British Indian administrative control in the last decade of the nineteenth century as a consequence of the British "forward policy" in Tibet.

Modernization in this context meant the introduction of certain administrative forms and values then prevalent in British India.[1] But in Sikkim, as in most of the "princely" states in India, the British sought to use the existing political structure and elite to the greatest extent possible in the transformation of the functions and objectives of administration. The process of "modernization" was thus very slow and gradual. This propensity for gradualism was retained by the Indian successors to the British in Sikkim after 1947, and at least until 1973 the changes in structure that were introduced were usually more in form than in substance. Indeed, what was most surprising after eight decades of recurrent administrative reorganization in Sikkim was the persistence of certain traditional features in the ethos and operation of the polity. The events of 1973–1975 in Sikkim constituted a break with this tradition, but initially, at least, not a total break.

The traditional political system under the Namgyal dynasty in Sikkim had involved an intricate devolution of administrative powers and func-

[1] This is, of course, a very narrow definition of "modernization," but it is the one generally in use in the subcontinent, even in the Himalayan border states. Nepal under the Rana regime (1846–1951) had introduced substantial modifications in its administrative system, but as these conformed to indigenous principles of administration rather than to an external "Westernized" model, they are not usually classified as part of a modernization process — incorrectly in my view.

tions that have sometimes been characterized (inaccurately in certain respects) as "feudal." The Chogyal (king) of Sikkim was vested with absolute authority, and the government was operated as if the country were a private estate. At the central level (the palace or Darbar, as it was commonly called) the Chogyal was assisted by one or more officials bearing the designation Chandzoh — the equivalent of a "confidential secretary" in contemporary Sikkimese terminology — and a personal attendant called the Dronyer [literally, "introducer of guests or visitors"], the forerunner of the ADC. There was no departmental system as such, with a vertical distribution of administrative functions. Whatever administrative requirements arose were handled by either the Chandzohs or Dronyer, as was deemed appropriate by the Chogyal. Regional and local administration was vested in the Dzongpons (district officers) appointed by the Chogyal or, for their private estates, in the Kajis (landowning nobility of Bhutia/Lepcha descent).

CENTRAL ADMINISTRATIVE SYSTEM

The appointment of a "political officer" by the British Government of India in 1890, and the concurrent policy under which the Chogyal was temporarily deprived of his political powers and functions, resulted in a basic reorganization of the administrative structure in Sikkim. For the first time a number of departments were established, headed by officers directly responsible to the political officer. A State Council was appointed by the political officer in the place of the traditional council, the Lhadi Medi, which had been a larger, more representative body than its successor.[2] At the time of its inception in 1890, for instance, the State Council consisted of only five members — four Kajis that were known for their pro-British proclivities, and the head lama of Pemiongche monastery. Later, the political officer expanded it to include representatives of the Nepali Thikadari (landlord) families.

The State Council had no direct administrative duties at the central level, as it was a consultative body whose advice the political officer would seek at his own discretion. But as its members were some of the most powerful and influential men among the Sikkimese, the political officer was largely dependent upon them for the implementation of policy, and thus their concurrence was usually sought on important policy

[2] The Lhadi Medi was not dispensed with entirely, however, and continued to function on rare occasions in which the Chogyal wished to obtain the views of a broader group than the State Council. The Lhadi Medi that was summoned in 1963 to discuss the Chogyal's marriage to an American, for instance, included most of the traditional leaders of the Bhutia/Lepcha community, but not several members of the Sikkim Council.

decisions.[3] As Kajis and Thikadaris, the council members were also crucial links in the regional and local administrative structure, virtually functioning in the capacity of district officers.

The system of administration introduced by the political officers was retained in large part by the Chogyal after full internal authority had been restored to him in 1918.[4] Some revisions were made, however, both in the structure of the administration and in the composition of the bureaucracy at the higher levels. The State Council was expanded to include representatives of the Kaji families that had taken a pro-dynasty position in the disputes between the Chogyals and the political officers. The council retained its status as an advisory body with no direct voice in the administration,[5] but some coordination was achieved with the secretariat through the appointment of the general secretary and the Chogyal's personal secretary as councillors.

To assist him in the administration, the Chogyal in 1918 appointed three secretaries, each with jurisdiction over several departments. The general secretary was given charge of the administration of lessee holdings (i.e., Kaji and Thikadari estates), political affairs, and external relations; the judicial secretary had the courts, jails, monasteries, and educational institutions under his charge; and the financial secretary was responsible for governmental revenues and expenditures. Later, a home secretary was added, assuming authority over some of the departments formerly allotted to the general and judicial secretaries.

In addition to the departments headed by the various secretaries, there was a separate forest service and a private secretariat for the Chogyal. In the latter body, the personal assistant to the Chogyal was usually one of the most influential, and often controversial, officers in the Sikkim government service, since he was a member of the British Indian Foreign Office deputed to Sikkim as an advisor to the Chogyal. According to one knowledgeable Sikkimese, the personal assistant occasionally found himself at odds with the British political officer because of the former's tendency to identify himself too closely with the palace and Sikkimese interests. In 1927, the personal assistant had to resign because of a disagreement with the political officer, and the post was abolished.

[3] A convention had developed prior to the restoration of full powers to the Chogyal in 1918, under which if the Chogyal and the State Council were in agreement, the matter was not submitted to the political officer for his approval. If the political officer's views were solicited and these agreed with those of the council, the Chogyal's objections were overruled.

[4] According to Rai Bahadur T. D. Densapa (personal communication), Chogyal Tashi Namgyal had to agree not to make any major changes in the administrative and State Council system before "full" powers were restored to him in 1918.

[5] Previously the Chogyal and the political officer usually jointly presided over the State Council proceedings. After 1918, however, neither official participated in the council sessions except under unusual conditions.

Thereafter the Chogyal had a personal secretary, usually a Sikkimese, as the head of his private secretariat.

POST-1947 ADMINISTRATIVE REORGANIZATION. The turmoil and confusion that characterized post-1947 politics in Sikkim inevitably had a severe impact upon the government service as well, and it was several years before order and coherence were restored in the administration.[6] The first disruptive incident of more than immediate significance was the appointment of three Sikkim State Congress leaders as "Secretaries to His Highness" by the Chogyal on March 10, 1948. Under more settled conditions this might have been an appropriate way to associate the newly emerging political forces in Sikkim with the administration. But neither the State Congress or the Darbar seemed to be prepared to make the kinds of accommodation expected by the other, and a major political crisis ensued over the relationship between the party high command and the secretaries. Thus ended the first attempt to "democratize" the administration in Sikkim.

Administrative procedures and lines of authority were also the central issues in the second major political reform attempted by the Sikkim Darbar in the 1947–1950 period. The appointment in May 1949 of a "popular" ministry, in which the State Congress held a majority of the seats, was the catalyst in this instance. A disagreement arose between the palace and the State Congress ministers almost immediately, focused around the extent of the latter's authority over the departments in the secretariat whose portfolios they held. The Darbar insisted that the secretaries should continue to submit papers directly to the Chogyal for his consideration and that the ministers should function essentially as advisers to the ruler on appropriate departmental matters. The ministers, however, demanded decision-making powers along the lines of a cabinet system of government. A confrontation occurred when the chief minister, on his own initiative and without the approval of the Chogyal, issued an order reducing the house tax (*Sikkim Secretariat Files* 1949a). This disagreement led to the dismissal of the ministry less than one month after its appointment. In the ensuing crisis, an Indian official, J. S. Lall, was "loaned" to Sikkim to head the administration.

Reorganization of the secretariat, then virtually inoperative because of the constant disruptions that had occurred, became one of the prime

[6] One of the most serious problems in the functioning of the administrative services in the 1947–1949 period was the extensive politicization of officials. One of the first acts of the new prime minister in 1949 was the preparation of a "Sikkim Government Servants' Conduct Rules," which made it illegal for government servants to "take part in, subscribe in aid of, or assist in any way any political party, movement or programme in Sikkim State or India or associate with any political party in any manner, expressing or implied in the furtherance of its aims" (*Sikkim Darbar Gazette* 1952).

objectives of Lall after his appointment as prime minister (Dewan)[7] in August 1949. This was to take nearly five years to accomplish. At the time Lall took office, only the financial secretary was still functioning, as the other three secretaries had resigned on the appointment of the State Congress ministry. Rather than appoint new secretaries, the prime minister designated four "officers-in-charge" to head the various departments, and an officer superintendent to coordinate relations between the departments and the prime minister's office. Subsequently, Lall made several attempts to reorganize the secretariat, but the usual result, according to several Sikkimese officials who were involved in these proceedings, was the compounding of confusion and a further lowering of morale.

The first substantial step in the direction of an effective rationalization of the administrative process was the formation of an Executive Council in 1953. A dyarchical system of administration was devised, under which certain departments were "transferred" to the executive councillors (assisted after 1958 by deputy executive councillors), while the remaining departments were "reserved" as the charge of the secretariat officials. The "transferred" departments were education, press and publicity, forests, agriculture, public works, bazaars, excise, and state transport (i.e., licensing of vehicles, etc.); the "reserved" category included establishment (civil service), ecclesiastical (Tibetan Buddhist monasteries, shrines, and lands), Sikkim nationalized transport, police, finance, land reform, and Panchayats.

In 1954, while N. K. Rustomji was prime minister a chief secretary post was established to supervise the administration of the reserved departments. It was also in that year that Sikkim's first economic development plan was inaugurated. A development secretariat was established, headed by a development commissioner, whose primary function was to coordinate the development programs undertaken by the various departments in the secretariat and to prepare new plans as required. The development secretariat operated directly under the prime minister, through the chief secretary.

By 1955, therefore, the pattern of administration as it existed until 1973 had been established in its essentials, and the only major modification introduced subsequently was the local government (Panchayat) system. The reserved departments were headed by secretaries, while the top government servants in the transferred department were desig-

[7] The title of the Indian official who headed the administration in Sikkim has changed over time. From 1949 to 1963 he was called the Dewan (a common title in the former Indian princely states). From 1963–1970 the title used was principal administrative officer (PAO), while thereafter the old Sikkimese title of Sidlon was used to designate this officer. The change in title was of course not without significance. For reasons of convenience, however, I shall refer to this officer as prime minister throughout this essay, ignoring the changes in his official designation.

nated as directors or some equivalent status. Coordination between the two sections of the secretariat was accomplished through the procedure under which both the chief secretary (reserved departments) and the executive councillors (transferred departments) channeled important matters to the Chogyal through the prime minister's office. As head of the secretariat and chairman of the Executive Council, the prime minister functioned as the chief of both branches of the administration. The practice under which the executive councillors usually submitted papers to the chief secretary before forwarding them to the prime minister also was intended to encourage maximum communication between the various departments prior to consideration at the higher level.

Despite these administrative contrivances, there was persistent criticism directed at the alleged lack of coordination between the reserved and transferred departments under the dyarchical system of administration. Dyarchy resulted in duplication of efforts, overlapping of jurisdictions, and a spirit of competition between the reserved and transferred departments that occasionally led to administrative confusion. The concentration of administrative authority in the Chogyal and the prime minister counteracted some of the potentially dysfunctional aspects of dyarchy, but often at the cost of initiative and the willingness to assume responsibility for decision making at the lower levels of the administration. But given the complicated communal political system in Sikkim, this was considered a small price to pay for the substantial degree of administrative stability that was achieved after 1955.

INDIAN OFFICIALS IN SIKKIM. There were other, seemingly more critical problems facing the administrative system than lack of coordination between the departments. Undoubtedly one of the most critical was the incredibly complex administrative-cum-political role that had been assigned to the prime minister. This stemmed from various factors, including the method of his appointment; the character of his relationship with the palace, the secretariat, the political party leadership, and the Indian political officer; as well as to a certain imprecision over whether the prime minister was a Sikkimese official "borrowed" from India or an Indian official "deputed" to Sikkim. As the focal point in the entire administrative apparatus, it is not surprising that the office became a center of controversy, and that there were widely divergent views as to the wisdom of continuing the practice of having an Indian offical at the head of the administration.

Formally, the prime minister was appointed by the Chogyal in the same manner as other officials. In actual fact, however, this was accomplished only after extensive consultations between the Sikkim Darbar and the Government of India, during which a consensus was reached concerning

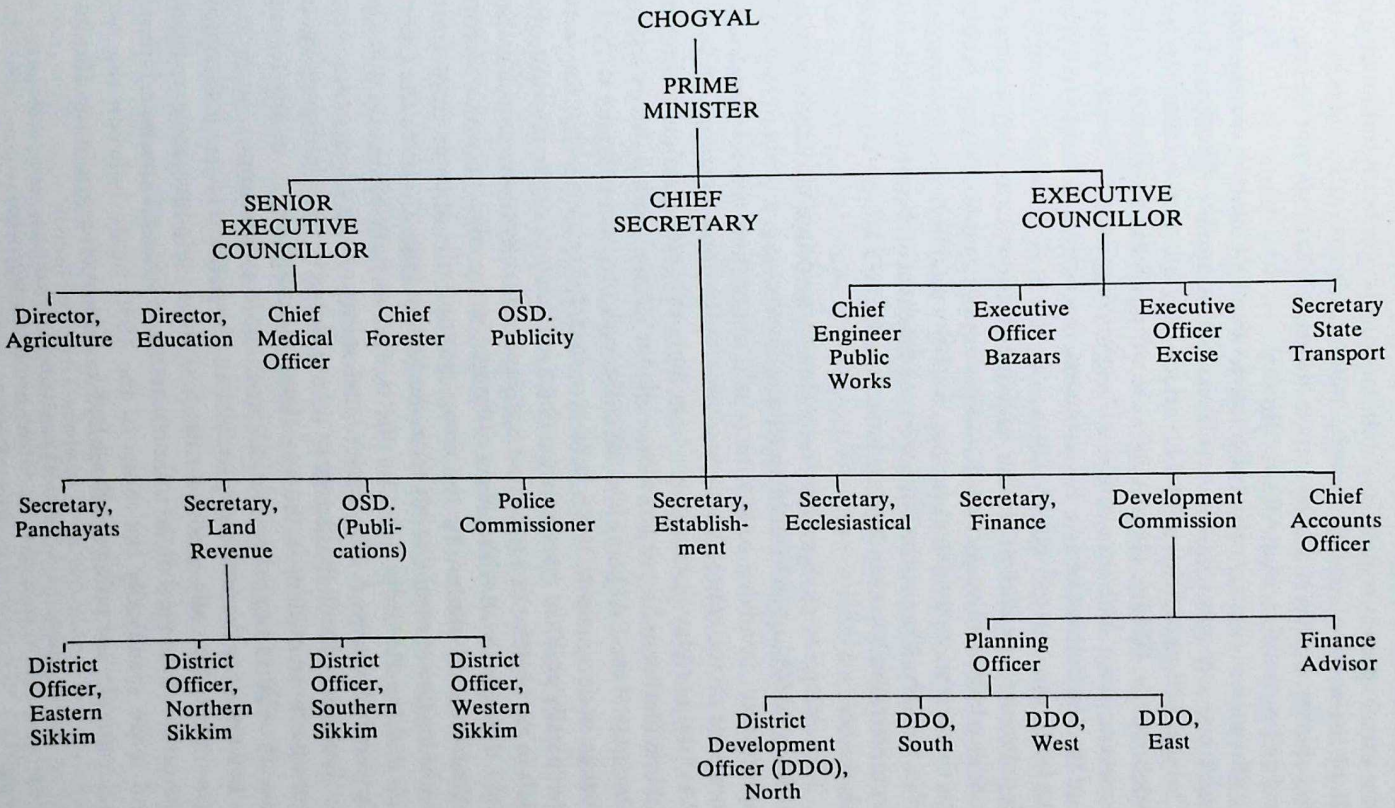

Figure 1. Administrative chart: Government of Sikkim

the person to be appointed to this post.[8] While there was no formal provision expressly requiring that the prime minister be an Indian official, all of them were members of the Indian Administrative Service (the successor to the old ICS), the Indian Frontier Administrative Service, or in 1973 of the External Affairs Ministry.

The prime minister was expected to conduct himself in the same fashion as any other Sikkimese official, giving proper deference to the Chogyal and participating in the various religious and secular holidays celebrated in Sikkim. He usually wore official Sikkimese dress at these events or other state occasions, such as presiding over the State Council and the Executive Council. Nevertheless, it was unreasonable to expect the prime minister to forget that he was an Indian government servant, on deputation to the Sikkim Darbar, and that his future career lay within the Indian administrative service. It was generally assumed by most Sikkimese that the prime minister's primary loyalty would be to the Government of India rather than to the Darbar in any fundamental conflict of interest, no matter how attached he may have become to Sikkim in the course of his service.

The change in designation from Dewan to principal administrative officer (PAO) in 1963 would appear to have been primarily of symbolic significance, involving only some slight changes in the administrative functions of the office. There are some indications, however, that the PAO did not play as crucial a role in high-level consultation within the Sikkim Darbar as his predecessor, while the administrative and executive functions of the PAO may also have diminished to some degree with the change in designation. It has been reported, for instance, that for some specifically political questions the chief secretary or other relevant officials in the secretariat would transmit papers directly to the palace rather than through the PAO's office, although presumably he was still consulted on such matters by the Chogyal. Similarly, appeals from court decisions now moved directly from the Sikkim High Court to the Chogyal, and the PAO did not have the powers of judicial review that the Dewan had enjoyed. The powers and status of the office were even further reduced with the change of title to Sidlon in 1970, although again this was more evident in the way things were done than in any formal modification of the prime minister's functions and powers.

In contrast to the prime minister, the Indian political officer at Gangtok was never formally part of the Sikkimese administrative service. Nevertheless, in view of the intimate nature of Indo-Sikkimese relations, and more specifically the terms of the 1950 treaty between the two governments, the political officer had an important voice in the Sikkim-

[8] The normal procedure was for the Sikkim Darbar to select some likely Indian official as its candidate, and suggest his name for the post to the Indian government, which then arranged for his deputation to Sikkim on leave.

ese decision-making process and even at some levels of administration. Decision making at the highest level in Sikkim prior to 1973 normally involved the Chogyal, his principal Sikkimese advisers, the prime minister, and the political officer, even on those subjects in which India had no direct treaty responsibilities. The political officer's participation was essential not only for obvious political reasons, but also because India subsidized a large proportion of the Sikkimese budget, and it was only the political officer who could speak for the Indian government in Sikkim.

The 1950 Indo-Sikkimese treaty placed responsibility for Sikkim's defense, communications, and foreign relations in the government of India. Defense was largely the function of the Indian Army and the Defence Ministry, and communications fell under the jurisdiction of the Central Public Works Department or the Border Road Development Board for the most part. The political officer was the coordinating agency and contact man with the Sikkim government on these matters, but played no direct role in their administration. However, Sikkim's external relations were conducted by the chief secretary to the political officer — that is, through the office of the political officer at Gangtok. Given the recurrent crises in the border situation and Sikkim's direct involvement in the Sino-Indian dispute, this in itself guaranteed the political officer a major role in high-level consultations in Sikkim.

While these have only rarely come to public attention, there were occasional reports after 1949 of the prime minister and the political officer viewing political developments in Sikkim in considerable different terms. If correct — which seems probable — this may have been due both to the different roles assigned to these Indian officers in their official capacity (i.e., the political officer as the government of India's representative in Sikkim and the prime minister as a Sikkimese official) as well as to their widely varying political and administrative backgrounds.

The political officers invariably were drawn from the Indian Foreign Service and from a relatively high level of the service — usually ambassadorial grade; the prime ministers' experiences on the other hand, had largely been confined to administrative service on the Indian frontier or at least within India.[9] The latter type of officials generally tended to be more sensitive to local sentiment among the border area communities and more responsive to local demands and grievances. The former, usually with years of service in diplomatic posts abroad, seemed to view developments from a broader, geopolitical perspective which conceived of areas such as Sikkim as a minor pawn in a much larger political game.

[9] Baleshwar Prasad (1957–1963) was one exception, as he had served as the Indian representative on the International Truce Commission in Vietnam prior to his appointment as Dewan. But he belonged to the Indian Administrative Service rather than the Foreign Service. C. S. Das, who was appointed chief executive after the political crisis in the spring of 1973, however, had an external affairs ministry background.

In any case, whatever the reasons may be, there is evidence that the Chogyal and his advisers generally coexisted on reasonably good terms with the prime ministers, but that their relations with the political officers were not always particularly harmonious.

Finally there were the numerous problems and stresses that were the inevitable result of the presence of many Indians in the Sikkimese administrative and technical services. A large proportion of the higher posts in the Sikkim Secretariat were held by Indians, including (in 1968) the director of agriculture, director of education, chief engineer, chief medical officer, development commissioner, chief justice, legal adviser, chief accounts officer, and police commissioner.

Initially, most of these officers were brought into the Sikkimese service because there were few Sikkimese with the required education or experience to fill these posts. Later, however, the top assistants in some of these departments were Sikkimese, and there was naturally some resentment that the highest posts were still in the hands of Indians. But wholesale dismissal of the latter and their replacement by Sikkimese was never really feasible. Such a move would have seriously complicated relations with New Delhi, whose suspicions about the Darbar's ultimate intentions would have been aroused. Nor would such action have been equitable, as many of the Indians in the Sikkim administrative service had served for an extended period and had worked their way up through the ranks. Unlike the prime minister, most of them did not belong to any Indian administrative service, but had made their careers in Sikkim. While "Sikkimization" of the administration was established as the ultimate objective by the palace, under even the best of circumstances this would have been a long-term process. The events of 1973–1975 have basically changed the rules of the game, of course, as Sikkim is now merely another state in the Indian Union operating under Indian administrative rules and regulations. It will be interesting to see whether these Indians — as well as the Bhutias, Lepchas, and Nepalis — who had been part of the Sikkimese bureaucracy are eventually absorbed on an equitable basis into the Indian Administrative Service.

DISTRICT AND LOCAL ADMINISTRATION

We had noted that the administrative changes introduced by the British political officer after 1890 had seriously disrupted the traditional political system. Eventually, a new pattern of regional and local administration emerged in which the Bhutia/Lepcha Kajis and the Nepali Thikadaris played the central role, displacing the Dzongpons [district officers] as the main agents of the Sikkim government at the regional level. This developed out of the land settlement program introduced by the first

political officer, which was used to accomplish substantial changes in the landownership pattern. Several Kaji families that had supported the Namgyal dynasty in its dispute with the British lost part of their landholdings in the course of the settlement, receiving compensation in the form of "subsistence allowances" amounting to 30 percent of the rent paid by the new lessee to the government.[10] A number of monasteries also lost all or part of their holdings on the same terms. This land was later distributed to the Kaji families which had close ties to the British political officer on fifteen-year leases or to Nepali Thikadaris on ten-year leases.

By the end of the nineteenth century, a large proportion of cultivable land in Sikkim had come within the ambit of the lessee system. The only significant exceptions were the private estates of the Namgyal dynasty and Kaji families, some monastic estates, and the Lachen/Lachung area of northern Sikkim, which continued to be administered upon the traditional basis unique to that region.

Initially, there were some important distinctions between the terms upon which Kajis and Thikadaris held their lessee lands, but eventually the status of the two categories of lessee landlords was made broadly equivalent. The system had these general characteristics:

1. The boundaries of the leases were set in general topographical terms, as no cadastral survey had yet been conducted in Sikkim, nor did one accompany the land settlement program. The leases ran for varying lengths of time, usually fifteen to thirty years for Bhutia and Lepcha Kajis[11] and ten years for Nepali Thikadaris. "Perpetual" leases were also given on rare occasions, but even these had to be renewed every thirty to fifty years. This latter category of land was treated on the same basis as other lessee lands under the land reform program.

2. The lessee landlord paid the government a fixed rent based upon the classification of the land within the holding rather than upon production. He also paid a tax upon each house within the holding. This house tax was collected by the landlord or his agent (Mandal) from the tenant household in addition to the rent for the land. This revenue system placed a strong incentive upon increasing the area under cultivation, as the lessee landlord collected rent on all newly cultivated plots without having to pay any additional land tax to the government.

3. Three types of tenancy systems were in general use in Sikkim, on private and monastic estates as well as on lessee holdings:

[10] In the course of the land settlement program, the political officer summoned all the Kajis to Gangtok to have the land grants they had received from the Namgyals changed to leases. Several of the Kajis who had supported Chogyal Thutob Namgyal against the British refused to come, and were then stripped of their landholdings.

[11] On August 16, 1909, the State Council decided that leases to Kajis should also be for ten years at an enhanced rate of rent (*Administrative report, 1909–1910* 1911:2). However, this rule was not implemented at that time, and subsequent efforts to revise lease-holding terms were also ineffective until the abolition of the system in 1949.

a. *Adiya:* production under this system was divided on a fifty-fifty basis between the landlord and the tenant after the seeds required for the next crop had been set aside.

b. *Kutiya:* under this system, the tenant entered into a contract with the landlord which obligated him to pay a specified amount no matter what the level of production.

c. *Mashikotta:* under this form of tenancy, the tenant obtained loans from the landlord to undertake cultivation, and then repaid these by turning over the entire production from the land for a certain period.

4. The lessee landlords served as "forest officers" in their leased areas, and were responsible for the implementation of forest regulations and all costs involved therein. As compensation, they were allowed to retain a certain proportion of all revenue collected from the forest. All registrations of land transactions were also accomplished through the lessee landlord, who was paid a fee for this important service.

5. The lessee landlord functioned as a magistrate on both his private estates and leased lands, and was responsible for maintaining the local courts and police. As compensation, he retained any fines levied by the court over which he presided.

6. The lessee landlord usually had a number of agents, termed Mandals, who acted on his behalf on leased holdings and private estates. The holdings were subdivided into blocks. The Mandal collected the revenue for the landlord in his block as well as any other exactions levied upon the tenants, such as the house tax, retaining a certain proportion, usually 7–8 percent, as his own compensation.

7. The landlord could usually exact several days' free labor from each of his tenants every year. The Mandals were also usually entitled to one day's work per year from each family in their block. This practice (*Kurwa*) led to serious unrest in the mid-1930's. It had virtually disappeared by the end of World War II, and was formally abolished by the Darbar in 1947 (*Sikkim Darbar Special Bulletin* 1963).

8. Sikkim government and British officials on tour (or at times on vacation, according to chronic Sikkimese complaints) in Sikkim were entitled to exact free labor for porterage purposes. The lessee landlords had the duty of providing this service, *jharlangi*,[12] in their territories. The Sikkim Darbar ordered the curtailment of the *jharlangi* system in 1945 (*Sikkim Darbar Special Bulletin* 1963).

[12] *Jharlangi* is a Nepali term, of comparatively recent usage in Sikkim. According to some Sikkimese sources, this "free porterage" system was first introduced by the British, who adopted the Nepali term they knew for this practice. Perhaps this is correct, but it is not the whole story. In the first place, Sikkimese officials and lessee landlords also used *jharlangi* for their own purposes. Secondly, the traditional Tibetan "free porterage" system (*ula*) had been in use in Sikkim long before the British arrived. *Jharlangi* and *ula* are similar, but the

THE 1951 LAND REFORM PROGRAM: The lessee landlords had been unhappy with a number of the reforms in the land system introduced after the Chogyal had regained full powers in 1918, but had limited themselves to vocal protests for the most part. The Sikkim government's decision in 1940 to postpone renewal of the land leases that had expired that year, however, set a series of events in motion that was to lead eventually to abolition of the system. A landlord association, which had been organized earlier but was virtually defunct, was reactivated at this time. A number of meetings were held at which all Kaji and Thikadari families were represented. The association presented a memorandum to the Chogyal, which requested better terms in the renewal of leases. The Sikkim government had very different goals in mind, however. Not only did it reject these proposals, but it refused to renew the leases on *any* terms, indicating the intention to abolish the entire system eventually. In the meantime, the lessee landlords were permitted to continue to carry out their normal functions on their lessee estates on an interim basis.

In 1946, a new facet was added to Sikkimese politics with the organization of antilandlord agitation. A "no-rent" campaign commenced and received substantial support from tenants (*bastiwallas*) throughout Sikkim. By 1947, the land rent (*khajana*) system was in a state of disarray, and the lessee landlords were reduced to asking the government to collect the rent for them. It was assumed that the government would only take the 10 percent of the rent traditionally allocated to the collectors, but this proved to be a miscalculation, as the government retained the entire rent collected.

By this time, the government had decided upon abolition of the lessee system, but moved gradually in stripping the landlords of the powers they wielded.[13] The first step, the abolition of the landlords' authority to register land transactions, was ordered on January 3, 1948 (*Sikkim Secretariat Files* 1948a). In September of that year an "informal conference" was held between the heads of the secretariat departments and several leading landlords, in which it was agreed that *bastiwallas* could pay the *khajana* to the state treasury if they preferred. It was also agreed that the landlords should lose their power to attach and sell the property of defaulting *bastiwallas*, and a revenue court was established to realize the *khajana* arrears (*Sikkim Secretariat Files* 1948b).

The crucial step in the landlord abolition program, however, was the

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terms upon which the two systems were used differed in certain respects. It would appear that Nepali Sikkimese operated under the *jharlangi* system while Bhutia/Lepcha obligations were those imposed under the *ula* system.

[13] Chogyal Palden Thondup Namgyal stated that the Sikkim government moved slowly at the early stage of the lessee landlord abolition program as they wanted to watch India's (and particularly West Bengal's) experience in this respect. Eventually, however, Sikkim moved considerably ahead of West Bengal in implementing a land reform program.

establishment of two Tahsils [districts], Eastern Sikkim and Western Sikkim, in August 1949. The Tahsildars [district officers] were empowered to conduct most of the functions previously allocated to the lessee landlords: revenue collector, judicial magistrate, and registrar of land transactions (*Sikkim Secretariat Files* 1949b). By this time, the only power retained by the landlords was with respect to forest administration, and prime minister Lall moved to take over this function also in 1950.

Thus, the abolition of lessee landlordism in 1951, retroactive to 1949, was essentially a formality, as the landlords had ceased to serve any significant function on their estates. All the 1951 Act accomplished, in effect, was to relieve the government from any responsibility to pay the landlords any share of the revenue collected since 1949. The most important features of the 1951 Act were:

1. The lessee landlord was eliminated as the intermediary for the government in the collection of the land tax and house tax, and the government formally assumed this function itself. This, in effect, abolished the lessee system, which had been based, in the final analysis, upon the landlord's status as revenue collector for the government.
2. The house tax was reduced from the old Rs. 6.75 per household rate to a uniform Rs. 1 throughout Sikkim.[14]
3. The landlord class was allowed free (i.e., nontaxable) holdings up to a maximum of 100 acres on their private estates. For any landholdings over that amount, the owner paid land taxes at the regular rates. (These free holdings were abolished in 1967, and all landholders then paid standard tax rates for lands in their possession.)

It is obvious that the 1951 land reform program, important as it was politically and administratively, was not a radical measure. Although many cultivators obtained rights to the land they tilled, tenancy was not abolished, nor even significantly reduced in scope. The *mashikotta* form of tenancy, which was extremely unpopular but not very widespread, was declared illegal, but the two most widely used systems for the division of production between tenant and landowner—*adiya* and *kutiya* tenancy—were retained in their old form. There were no specific regulations guaranteeing tenancy rights or reducing rents under this program. Nor was rural indebtedness, a pernicious and omnipresent feature of the tenancy system, directly attacked, although rural cooperative credit associations established by the government were intended to replace the traditional credit system. Thus, while the 1951 program was not a particularly ambitious reform measure, it was the first step in the direction of a gradual modernization of the agrarian administrative system that had both social justice and improvement in agricultural production as its goal.

[14] The high rate of the house tax had been one of the major grievances cited in the 1946–1949 antilandlord agitation.

ADMINISTRATIVE REORGANIZATION, 1957–1967. The 1951 land reform program's most important feature was the manner in which it undercut the superstructure of the regional and local administration through the abolition of the lessee landlord system. It became necessary, therefore, to revamp the entire structure, in the process creating several new regional and local institutions. The two key programs in this endeavor were those involving the division of Sikkim into districts headed by district officers (initially designated as Tahsildars) appointed by the Sikkim government and the establishment of popularly elected Panchayats [local councils]. This latter program, first introduced in 1951, floundered almost immediately and was only revived in 1966. The administrative reorganization at the district level, in contrast, progressed steadily and rapidly without any particularly serious setbacks.

Sikkim had been divided into two districts — Eastern Sikkim and Western Sikkim — in 1949. Subsequently, district boundaries were twice redrawn, with first Northern Sikkim and then Southern Sikkim formed out of the original two districts. The general geographical boundaries of these four districts were: Western Sikkim, the area to the west of the Rangit River up to the Talung chu Valley, with Geyzing as district headquarters; Southern Sikkim, the area between the Rangit River on the west and the Tista River on the east, with Namchi as district headquarters; Eastern Sikkim, the area to the east of the Tista River and south of the Dikchu tributary of the Tista, with Gangtok serving as the district headquarters; and Northern Sikkim, the Lachen and Lachung river valleys, Jongu, and the upper Tista River Valley, with Mangan as district headquarters.

In each district, the district officer (DO) was assisted by a number of other officials appointed by the Sikkim Darbar, including a deputy development officer, an extension officer, a revenue inspector, and officers deputed to the district level by the various departments of the secretariats. The district officer had a wide variety of functions and powers, encompassing virtually all aspects of administration in his area. He was the leading judicial authority serving as the magistrate of the district court and as the head of the district police unit. He also functioned as the development officer, and all development programs fell within his jurisdiction. Land revenue collection was one of the DO's primary responsibilities, and he also approved the registration of any changes in land ownership. Finally, he was granted broad powers of supervision and control over local Panchayats.

LAND REVENUE SYSTEM. No cadastral survey had ever been attempted in Sikkim prior to 1950. Land revenue assessments had generally been based upon a system the British political officers borrowed from Nepal, under which assessments were calculated in terms of the amount of seed

required for a particular plot of land. The first cadastral survey based upon more scientific principles of land measurement commenced in 1951.

Under the cadastral survey procedures, lands in cultivable areas were graded on the following basis. The entire state was divided into a number of circles, each of which was classified as A, B, or C grade according to an established set of standards. The circles were subdivided into four grades — I, II, III, and IV — based upon (1) productivity, (2) proximity to a market, and (3) communications. Standard rates of land revenue were imposed for the same category of land throughout Sikkim. This was not the case when the new revenue system was first introduced in 1957, however, as Nepali cultivators were assessed at a higher rate than Bhutia/Lepchas — by tradition, one-fifth of production as compared to one-eighth (*Sikkim administrative report, 1912–1913* 1914:2). The Royal Proclamation of August 30, 1956 declared that this discriminatory land revenue system should be eliminated within ten years in order that "all duly recognized subjects of Sikkim shall be accorded equal treatment" (*Sikkim Darbar Gazette* 1956). A committee was set up to consider revision of the land revenue system. On the basis of its report, another Royal Proclamation was issued on June 7, 1957, announcing a 50 percent reduction of all land tax rates (*Sikkim Darbar Gazette* 1957:1–2). In 1966, all discrimination between communities was abolished, with the higher rates levied upon the Nepalis now being imposed upon the Bhutia/Lepchas as well.

Land tax rates also varied between the "wet" and "dry" fields, determined by whether artificial irrigation facilities were available. Per acre rates were:

Wet Fields: these varied from Rs. 4.25 for A-I fields to Rs. 1.10 for C-IV fields. This was the old Nepali rate which had been extended to Bhutia/Lepcha owners. The old rate for the latter group had been Rs. 3.35 for A-I to Rs. 1.10 for C-IV fields.

Dry Fields: the rate varied from Rs. 1.85 for A-I fields to Rs. 0.60 for C-IV fields. The old Bhutia/Lepcha rate had been Rs. 1.20 for A-I to Rs. 0.35 for C-IV fields.

A program under which all land was registered in the name of the landholder was also carried out as part of the cadastral survey. In the Sikkimese legal context, however, registration only implied certain proprietary rights, as ownership rights were still ultimately retained by the state.

For land revenue collection purposes, each district was divided into a number of estates, which in turn were subdivided into blocks. There were 108 estates in Sikkim, divided into three categories: (1) government estates (90), which included the old leased land areas as well as the

private estates of the Kaji and Thikadari families; (2) monastic estates (5); and (3) royal family estates (13). Precise figures on the proportion of land in each category of estates are not available. One Sikkimese official in the Land Revenue Office, however, estimated that the ratio between the number of estates in each category would also apply in broad general terms for the size of the holdings as well. Thus, approximately 85 percent of the land would be in government estates, 11 percent in royal family estates, and 4 percent in monastic estates.[15]

Different methods of collecting land revenue were employed on each category of estates. For the monastic estates, the land revenue was usually collected directly by the monastery or its agents, and was retained in its entirety by the monastery as part of the government's subsidization program to religious establishments. The land revenue office in the district, thus, had no revenue collection function on these estates. Revenue collection on the royal family estates was handled in part by the Chogyal's agents and in part by the land revenue office in the district. The latter deducted expense charges and turned over the balance to the Chogyal, who paid no land revenue to the government from this income.

The government estates were divided into blocks, which could consist of one village or a number of villages according to customary practice. The boundaries for the blocks that applied at the time that much of this land formed part of the holdings of lessee landlords were retained in most instances. Nor was the revenue collection system at the block level altered significantly. The Mandals [block agents] who had previously collected revenue for the lessee landlords prior to 1951 carried out the same function for the government.

Under the new system, there were approximately three hundred Mandals in Sikkim, usually assisted in their revenue collection duty by a subordinate, the Karbari. The Mandal retained 7 percent of the revenue collected as his compensation, and also received a travel allowance. While the Mandal posts were not legally hereditary, the general practice of the Darbar had been to appoint someone from the family that had traditionally held the post if there was an eligible member. The Karbari was not given official recognition by the government, and his compensation came out of the Mandal's share of the revenue. The mandal functioned generally as the village headman, and as the agent of the government in certain other respects in addition to revenue collection. The introduction of the Panchayat system, however, tended to down-

[15] An official in the ecclesiastic department estimated that monastic estates contained about 15,000 acres. The total area of cultivated land in Sikkim was placed at approximately 186,000 acres by the director of agriculture, while forest land amounted to about 480,000 acres, part of which lies in uninhabited areas, according to a forestry department official. Thus the 4 percent estimate for monastic estates would seem to be reasonable, assuming that these included both cultivated and forest lands.

grade the status of the Mandal, as the chairman of the Panchayat accrued greater prestige and power.

PANCHAYAT SYSTEM. The Panchayats established in the 1951–1953 period had been constituted primarily as local judicial bodies with very few and comparatively insignificant executive powers. In the 1951 Act (*Sikkim Darbar Gazette* 1951:2–3), these latter were restricted to the right (but not the obligation) to set up schools, *dharmasalas* [rest houses for pilgrims or other travelers, usually on routes to shrines, temples, etc.] village paths, fording places, and cattle pounds. The 1965 Act (*Sikkim Darbar Gazette* 1965:1–7) not only extended the Panchayat's role in development activities, but also provided it with certain executive functions — such as the maintenance of vital statistic records and the management of primary schools — which previously had been the responsibility of the Mandal or some district level official. The Panchayats were also given a role in the mobilization of labor and local resources for the Darbar's development schemes, and made responsible for maintaining any works or buildings constructed in the block under such programs. The Panchayat's judicial authority in civil cases was also greater under the 1965 Act than it had been under the 1951 Act, although a provision barring the Panchayat from exercising any competence in criminal cases was incorporated in both measures.

The president and vice-president of the block Panchayat were elected from its own ranks for three-year terms; the Panchayat could also appoint a secretary who served in this capacity for both the block Panchayat and the block Sabha (literally, "block assembly" composed of all eligible electors). Panchayat meetings, which had to be held at least once a month, were presided over by the Panchayat president. All Mandals in the block were ex-officio members of the Panchayat, but had only normal membership rights. Block Sabha meetings, which were presided over by the Panchayat president, had to be held at least once a year to review the work of the Panchayat and to propose new programs for the future.

The block Panchayat revenue could be vested in the block Panchayat fund managed by the secretariat, with the latter's approval. The sources of revenue permitted to the block Panchayat were: (1) the entire "local rate" (i.e., house tax) from the block area; (2) a share determined by the government out of a fund consisting of 10 percent of the land revenue collected by the government; (3) a matching grant by the Darbar for any original scheme for which public contributions had been collected by the block; and (4) sanitation and water cesses when such services were provided by the block Panchayat. The budget prepared by the Panchayats had to be submitted to the district Panchayat officer for his scrutiny.

It is apparent that the block Panchayats had been assigned a strategic

role in the government's reorganization of the local administrative system, but it is equally apparent that the government considered it essential to maintain broad supervisory and control powers over the block Panchayats. This was accomplished through a number of procedures. The 1965 Act gave the chief secretary, the Panchayat secretary, or any other designated officer the "general power of inspection, supervision, and control over the performance of the administrative duties of a Block Panchayat." The district officer was also granted wide powers over block Panchayats, and could countermand any of their orders or programs on his own initiative. The government further had the power to dissolve or supersede for a one-year period any block Panchayat that, in its opinion, had defaulted in its duties, and could even prescribe the exercise of any or all provisions of the 1965 Act.

These restrictive aspects notwithstanding, the establishment of the block Panchayats was an important step in the direction of the creation of a viable local administrative system which had popular roots in rural areas but, at the same time, was an integral part of the administrative system at the district level. There is no information available indicating whether the Panchayat system has been retained intact or modified since the merger of Sikkim into the Indian Union, but abolition would seem unlikely, as the broad pattern of the Sikkimese system is not inconsistent with that of Panchayats in other Indian states.

THE LACHEN/LACHUNG AREA. The two river valleys that dominate northern Sikkim, Lachen and Lachung, long had a special status with regard to settlement, land revenue, and local administration. These were by official decree "reserved" areas in which the right to settle and/or acquire land by outsiders, whatever their ethnic origin,[16] was strictly regulated although not completely forbidden. There is very little reliable data on the communities that inhabit this area. What we do know indicates that in many respects they do not conform to the general pattern elsewhere in Sikkim, even among other Bhutia communities. For instance, the shifting method of cultivation (*jhum*, so common to the non-Tibetan Buddhist tribal groups in the Northeast Frontier Area of India) is also practiced in Lachen/Lachung, at least to some extent. The land revenue system, as adapted for other areas of Sikkim which use permanent methods of cultivation, was considered inappropriate for Lachen and Lachung. A distinctive land revenue system was devised under which taxes were paid

[16] Some leaders of the Nepali community in Sikkim had complained frequently and vehemently about Lachen and Lachung's "reserved" status, charging that this was discriminatory against Nepali Sikkimese and intended to deter Nepali settlement in the area. According to my information, however, even Bhutias and Lepchas from other areas of Sikkim had difficulty obtaining permission to settle in these two valleys. The Sikkim Darbar's exclusion policy in this area, thus, cannot accurately be described as discriminatory against Nepali Sikkimese in application.

each year only on those portions of a family's holdings that were actually cultivated.

Lachen and Lachung also had their own traditional local government system, and the provisions of the 1965 Panchayat Act were not extended to this area. Under the traditional system, a headman (Pipon) was elected annually by a general vote of the villagers. The Pipon was responsible for the collection of land tax from each family in his village, based upon a rent roll which specified the quantity of production under the shifting method of cultivation. Presumably, the headman also functioned as the government's agent in other respects, including judicial and police duties. At this time there is no information on what has happened to the special status enjoyed by Lachen and Lachung under the post-1975 administrative system in Sikkim. But the dynamics of the political environment in Sikkim would seem to make it unlikely that the old administrative system and the restrictions on settlement will be retained by the Nepali-dominated Sikkim state government on any long-term basis.

THE 1973 AGREEMENT

Widespread public disorders, supported by two of the three principal political parties, broke out in Sikkim in the spring of 1973 following the election of a new State Council. The law and order situation deteriorated to the point where the Chogyal finally agreed to request the assistance of the Indian armed forces to reestablish the authority of the government in several sections of the country. Under New Delhi's auspices, discussions were held between representatives of the palace, the political parties, and the Government of India. In the agreement reached on May 8, 1973, certain changes in both the electoral and administrative systems were introduced.

At the central level, virtually all of the existing political administrative institutions were affected either directly or implicitly. Under these terms, for instance, it was specifically provided that the prime minister — now termed the chief executive — "shall be appointed by the Chogyal *on the nomination of the Government of India*" (emphasis added). What had been an informal arrangement previously in which the Chogyal had substantial latitude in the selection of the prime minister now became the prerogative of the Government of India. Moreover, some of the limitations previously imposed on the chief executive by his status as a Sikkim government official responsible to the Chogyal for the performance of his duties no longer applied.

The dyarchical administrative system was also abolished, and the division between transferred and reserved departments no longer pertained. The elected assembly was granted the authority to propose and pass laws

concerning all of the departments of government, although it was still denied the right to discuss or question: (1) the Chogyal and members of the royal family; (2) any matter pending before a court of law; (3) the appointment of the chief executive and members of the judiciary; and (4) any matters which concerned the responsibilities of the Government of India in Sikkim.

The authority of the chief executive over the administration — with the exception of the "palace establishment" and the Sikkim Guards — was also defined more explicitly. He served as the presiding officer over both the elected assembly and the cabinet (executive council). While "all important matters" (left unspecified) had to be submitted to the Chogyal for his approval, the chief executive could act on his own initiative in cases "where immediate action is required." In such instances "he shall obtain the Chogyal's approval as soon after the action has been taken as possible," by inference allowing the Chogyal no prerogative to refuse his approval.

The chief executive's prime ministerial status was further enhanced by the provision of the agreement under which members of the Executive Council are appointed by the Chogyal *on the advice* of the chief executive. Thus, nominally at least, the principal attributes of a parliamentary constitutional monarchy had been introduced in Sikkim with the important exception, of course, of the appointment or removal of the chief executive, which became solely a function of the Government of India.

The power and status of the Chogyal was seriously diminished by the agreement. While he was still the head of state, his capacity to control and manipulate the administrative and political systems was substantially reduced. His scope for initiative in virtually all fields of government was now superseded by the chief executive who emerged as the real head of the government. The subsidiary status of the Chogyal was further reinforced by the provision of the agreement stipulating that any "difference of opinion" between the Chogyal and the chief executive would be referred to the Indian political officer, "who shall obtain the advice of the Government of India, which shall be binding." Presumably, New Delhi would tend to side with its own man in such situations.

The 1973 agreement between the two governments was superseded by the terms under which Sikkim acceded to the Indian Union in 1975. The monarchy was abolished, and Sikkim became another Indian state operating under all the constitutional and administrative rules and procedures applicable elsewhere in India. It will probably take some time, but the complete "Indianization" of Sikkim's administrative system would now seem inevitable. Whether that constitutes "modernization" is, of course, still a subject debated by specialists on the Indian administrative system.

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Bureaucracy and Bureaucrats: A Few Themes Drawn from the Nepal Experience

MERRILL R. GOODALL

The "revolution" in Nepal of 1950–1951 carried forward more from the past than is readily manifest. New themes were introduced alongside the old. The newer themes consisted of the forms and facade of the modern state. A central secretariat was established in the Singha Durbar, the residence of the former hereditary Rana prime ministers. Ministries were introduced, and in them departments responsible for executive action were installed. The country's first budgets were prepared, cabinets appointed, civil service rules promulgated, and economic development plans announced. But the new elements did not supplant the older systems of running the government of the country, and to those who had inherited the power and prestige of the Ranas there were good reasons why the older systems should remain. A multiple system of government persists, though the older part is usually unknown to foreigners, including the technical personnel of foreign aid missions.

Three major administrative entities may be identified. The most visible of these is the formally constituted civil administration; a second is the foreign aid community; and a third is the palace and its secretariat. Though interrelated, these entities are also competitive. The first consists of the ministries, departments, and agencies of central and local administration. The second — the foreign aid community — plays an important role as financier. Few aspects of bureaucratic life in Nepal are untouched by the external assistance agencies. The royal palace, third of the entities, is the summit from which influence for administrative and economic development might emanate. The sovereign power of the country resides at this summit, and the inspiration of the public service could start from this source.

In 1952, when I was first employed by His Majesty's Government, what was most noticeable to the foreign observer was the buoyant,

risk-taking response of the younger civil servants whose careers were budding. Policy matters were being debated openly, an inventory of administrative resources was underway, and officers of government were sharing the novelty and the strain of doing business with foreigners. There was enthusiasm and confusion.

Yet only a decade later, much of that initial verve had tapered off. In 1963, after a twenty months' assignment as Senior United Nations Advisor in Governmental Administration I described in my final report the system as concerned primarily with the promotion of protective and security service; as a system modest in scale but also divisive and separatist; as a personnel organization subject to frequent "screenings" unrelated to work performance and consequent high turnover at upper levels; as an administrative system typified by congestion at top decision-making levels with mid-level civil servants often facing, by default of their superiors, matters of major concern; as a system which had yet to develop a responsible executive office and effective administrative leadership (Goodall 1963:3–10, 40–41).

Although the recommendations for institutional change in that 1963 report were accepted and in a few key respects implemented, it was apparent that civil servants, whose patterns of behavior were appropriate to older and more traditional sets of governmental goals and institutions, were unlikely to adjust to the requirements an action-oriented system would impose on them. There was little incentive for senior officers to work for a system which they could but barely appreciate and which they saw as unlikely to emerge.

Not only the formal organization of the administrative system, but the civil servants also, deserved study, and in Nepal again in 1969–1970 I was able to study the government's senior officers more systematically than before. Some I had known for nearly two decades — as colleagues in Nepal, as graduate students in the United States, and in the service of the United Nations. It should be emphasized that the country's topmost officers possess, by all formal standards, high technical competence. In 1970 for example, the seventeen secretaries of ministries of His Majesty's Government and the three planning commissioners who were not also secretaries were highly educated. Six had attained the Ph.D. degree from outstanding, highly selective American and European graduate schools. Seven others held M.A. and M.Sc. degrees. One held Master of Law, Master of Commercial Law, and LL.B. degrees. Two had earned B.A. or B.Sc. degrees. Only three had no B.A. degree, but of these one had rich military experience including a combat role in Burma, and another had earned an unusual record of rewarding, practical service in agricultural development.

Other characteristics were found in this well-educated elitist corps, and these were drawn from a forty-seven-item questionnaire which I adminis-

tered in 1970 to the senior officers, among others. In 1972 I returned to Nepal, on invitation of the Centre for Economic Development and Administration, and presented the findings of that questionnaire in the form of a print-out of my CROSS-TAB program during a three-day secretaries' colloquium. My observations in this paper are confined to the cross-tabulation of the answers to sixteen selected questions asked of the twenty secretaries and other planning commissioners who were not secretaries. These responses point to a pattern in which the top twenty appear to be divided into two "clusters." Each cluster is made up largely, though not entirely, of people of similar background in terms of birthplace, ethnic group, and how they chose their career. Each cluster tends to have an identifiable orientation to the job, and feelings of accomplishment or frustration relate to this orientation. One would not want to overstate the differences, though they do deserve scrutiny.

The pattern is essentially this: one group of about ten seems to have a predominantly "prestige-oriented" view of its job, and another group seems to have a "performance-oriented" view. The salient qualities could be summed up in the following way, with the caution that these are tendencies, not a clear dichotomy:

PRESTIGE-ORIENTED. This group tends:
—to be secretaries only, rather than secretary-planning commissioners or planning commissioners;
—to consist solely of Chhetri and Brahman;
—to have been born in Kathmandu;
—to have served with fewer public corporations;
—to have fallen into their careers passively;
—to like their job for the prestige it gives them;
—to have fewer complaints about the job, or to have complaints having little to do with performance;
—to be frustrated by little except insufficient respect;
—to believe that the government's economic programs are good;
—to think that the important problems facing Nepal are other than administration;
—to say that their major contribution has been in administration and governmental stability;
—to emphasize that governmental capability has increased in recent years;
—to note that there had been no recent innovation in government;
—to say that only better administration rather than autonomous institutions were needed.

PERFORMANCE ORIENTED. This group tends:

—to consist of one-half of the secretaries and almost all of the secretary-planning commissioners and planning commissioners;
—to consist of those born outside Kathmandu and of about one-half of those born in Kathmandu;
—to consist of all of those of Newar, Gurung, and Tharu origin and about one-half of those of Chhetri and Brahman origin;
—to have served in more public corporations than the prestige group;
—to have chosen their careers in a more active way than the prestige group;
—to like their job for the contribution they can make;
—to dislike aspects of their job that hinder their performance;
—to be most frustrated by hindrances to performance;
—to think less positively about the government's economic programs than the prestige group;
—to think that poverty and improving administration are among the most important problems facing Nepal;
—to believe, with the prestige group, that their major contribution has been in administration;
—to say that governmental capability has not increased in recent years;
—either to agree with the prestige group that there had been no important governmental innovation, or to say that the important innovation had been the growth in government;
—to say that not only better administration but autonomous institutions were needed;
—to be more negative than the prestige group about the value of foreign aid.

Thus briefly summarized, the data confirm only that a bureaucratic system is closely related to a country's physical and cultural landscape. While the quantum of public administration in Nepal is slight, many of the topmost officers have achieved a high degree of competence. Yet among these officers, some of whom would grace any West European or North American bureaucracy, strikingly dissimilar orientations are found. And although the beginnings of a countrywide system of administration have been established, the system has yet to pursue representativeness as a value, and the openness of the structure to novel and experimental policy inputs is as yet unclear.

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SECTION THREE

The Central Asian Perspective

The Retention of Pastoralism among the Kirghiz of the Afghan Pamirs

M. NAZIF SHAHRANI

The history of the systematic study of pastoral nomadic societies by professional anthropologists is rather brief. In fact, the beginning of anthropological concern with cattle-breeding, mobile, tribal groups roaming over large, geographically marginal areas of Asia and Africa (the arid zone) where natural resources could not support agriculture, coincided with the end of colonial occupation in these areas and the emergence of independent nations. This anthropological endeavor was pursued in the wake of persistent efforts by the governments of these new sovereign states to build "united," centralized, "modernized," and industrialized nations, often with a deliberate policy of detribalization, and the systematic sedentarization of pastoral nomadic groups within national boundaries.

In most of these studies attention was given to two major theoretical anthropological concerns: (1) social change — both the long-range historical or evolutionary changes and the short-term acculturative processes of nomad-sedentary relations (i.e., the sedentarization of nomadic societies); and (2) the closely associated phenomenon of pastoral nomadic adaptation to the arid zone — in other words, the cultural ecology of pastoral nomadism. Procedures followed in these studies have differed and the development of a cohesive methodological and analytical scheme for the study and explanation of pastoral nomadic societies in their total environmental context is yet to be formulated.

In this paper I am not offering a cohesive analytical or methodological model. Instead I shall discuss the utility (or the lack of it) of a general thesis widely accepted in the profession, in an attempt to explain some

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data on the retention of pastoral nomadism collected from among the Kirghiz[1] pastoralists of the Pamirs of the Republic of Afghanistan. This thesis is that sedentarization of the very wealthy and the very poor in pastoral nomadic societies is a long-standing and regular process in many areas, and is a facet of the interdependence of steppe and village-town (Barth 1961, 1973; Sahlins 1968; Spooner 1973a,b).

The basis for this generalization lies in two fundamental factors related to the nature of pastoral nomadic investigation:

1. Anthropological research has been restricted to the pastoral nomadic societies inhabiting the desert and low steppe regions of the arid zone of Asia and Africa. The "high altitude zone" nomadism of continental Asia (for example, Tibet, the other Himalayan groups, and the Pamirs) has been excluded except for a monograph by Robert Ekvall (1968) on Tibetan pastoral nomadism.

2. The overriding emphasis has been on the effects of the physical conditions of the arid zone upon the nature of the economic interdependence of pastoral and peasant-urban societies. Such emphasis frequently disregards the effects of certain sociocultural (e.g., politico-historical, ethnic, linguistic, and religious-sectarian) factors pertinent to the particular local or regional situation in which the nomadization of peasantry or the sedentarization of nomads takes place.

This is not to say that the investigators have ignored these issues completely — they have not. In fact, the application of the concept of "total environment" by Barth in the *Nomads of South Persia,* and a more encompassing use of the concept of ecology in most of the recent studies, proves otherwise. Nevertheless, it is apparent that the treatment of peasant-pastoral interactions has been dominated by economic realities, which in many cases hold true for Middle Eastern and West Asian regions. Here I will try to present a case in which the participants decide upon their alternatives not solely on the basis of physical environmental, and economic constraints, but also actively and strongly consider the political, religious (sectarian), linguistic, ethnic, and historical realities.

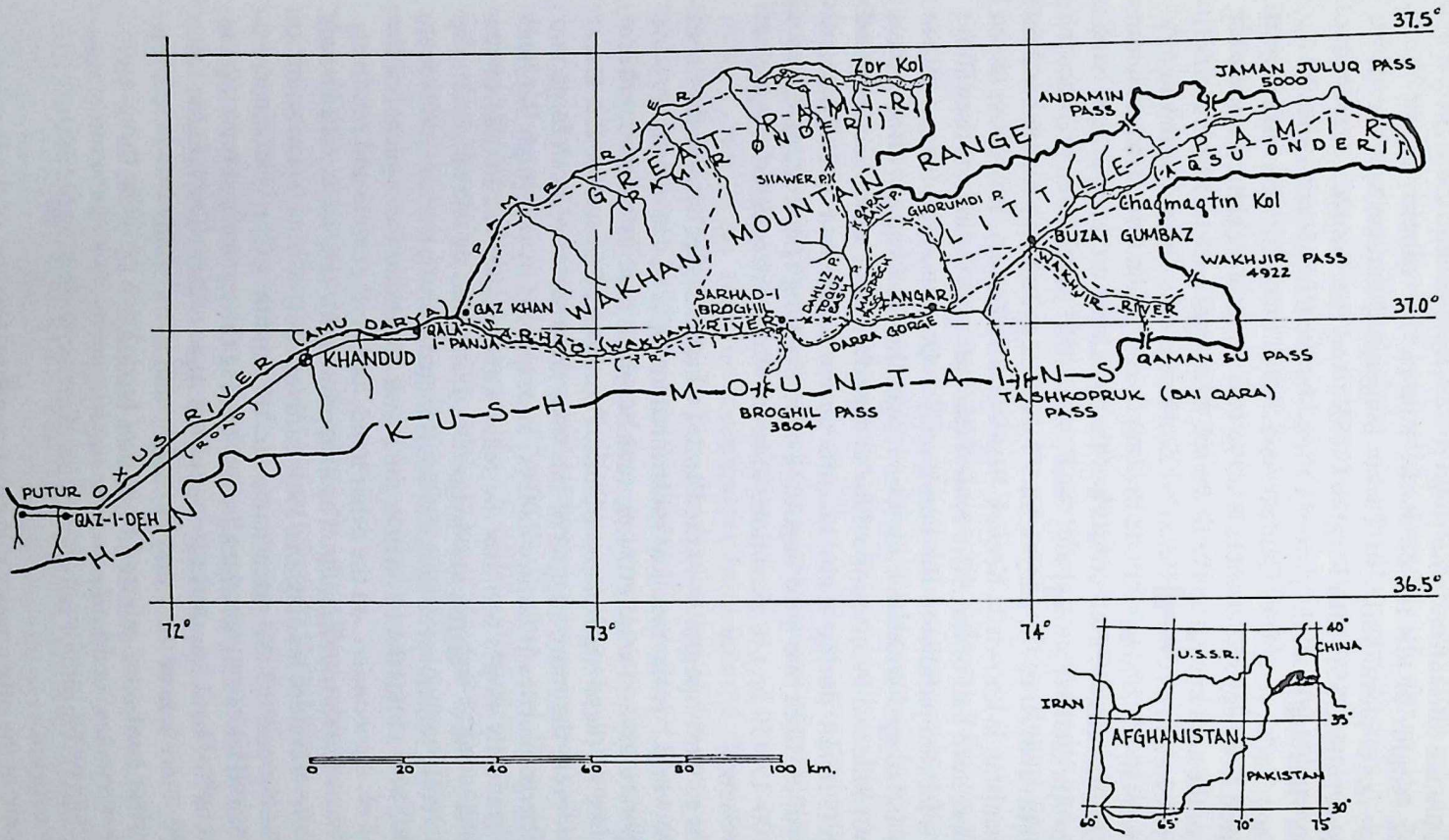
The Kirghiz of Afghanistan inhabit the Afghan Pamirs in the north-northeast section of the Wakhan Corridor, lying at 73°–75° east longitude and 36°:55′–37°:30′ north latitude. Here merge the most rugged and massive mountain ranges in the world: the Karakoram and the Himalayas to the south, the Tien Shans to the east-northeast, and the Hindu Kush massif to the west-northwest. The Afghan Pamirs are only small sections

[1] Material for this paper was gathered during my doctoral dissertation research (September 1972–February 1974). Financial support for conducting this research was provided by a grant from the Foreign Area Fellowship Program of the Social Science Research Council, with a supplementary fund from the Grant-in-Aid Program of the Wenner-Gren Foundation for Anthropological Research. I greatly appreciate the generous help of both institutions.

of two of the thirteen *onderlar* [high river valley–plateau land] referred to by the Kirghiz of this region as the Pamirs. The other *onderlar* [pl. of *onder*; *lar* is plural suffix in Turkic languages] extend into the Soviet Union (Tajik USSR and Kirghiz USSR) and the People's Republic of China (Sinkiang) and they are inhabited by the Kirghiz and other Turkic and non-Turkic people of Central Asia. All of these thirteen *onderlar* are referred to by specific names, and the two areas in Afghan territory are part of the area known as Pamir *onderi* and *Aqsu onderi*. Pamir *onderi* is also referred to as *Chung* Pamir or *Zor* Pamir (the Great Pamir) signifying its relatively higher altitude in comparison to the rest of the *onderlar.* The Afghan Great Pamir consists of the area lying on the southern banks of *Zor Kol* (Lake Victoria) and the Pamir River, which later becomes the Oxus River or *Amu Darya* (see Map 1). The section of *Aqsu onderi* within Afghanistan is known as *Kechek* Pamir (Little Pamir). It consists of the southwestern half of the *Aqsu onderi* (including both sides of the valley) and is located parallel to the Pamir *onderi,* but separated from it by the lofty and rugged Wakhan mountain range, thus making any direct access between the two Pamirs impossible except during the months of July and August. Even during these months access is extremely difficult and hazardous, since one must negotiate a series of high passes ranging from 17,200–17,450 feet in elevation, some of which are covered by glaciers year round.

The general topography of the Pamirs, which have been called the "roof of the world," is the result of millenniums of glacial activity, fluctuating temperatures, and wind erosion, each of which have left clear marks on the face of these high plateau lands. Prominent features of the Great Pamir area, the more rugged of the two, are a series of both large and small *jelga* [narrow tributary valleys] interspersed by *sert* [high flat land that gradually slopes towards the main watershed in the middle of the plateau]. These *jelgalar* are long. The difference in elevation at the inhabitable upper areas and the confluence are often over 2,000 feet, ending with a brief flat basin near the Pamir River and the branches of the *Zor Kol*. *Aqsu onderi,* on the other hand, has a rather wide and relatively flat basin and shorter *jelgalar.* The exception is *Wakhjir jelga,* well known to early travelers leading the long caravans into China because of its accessible pass of the same name. In the middle of the plateau are a number of lakes with *Chaqmaqten Kol* being the largest and forming the dividing line between the two sides of the *Aqsu onderi.* The Kirghiz refer to the sunny side of the valley as *kongey* and to the shady side as *terskey.* The river banks are referred to as *suni boyi.* Each of these three areas, *kongey, terskey,* and *suni boyi,* are used respectively as the winter, summer, and spring and/or fall encampment areas by the Kirghiz of the Little Pamir region.

Some of the other noticeable environmental features of the Pamirs are



Map 1. Wakhan Corridor and the Afghan Pamirs

the great patches of short grass meadows at high altitudes and the salt fields (*showra*), the former providing good pasturage for livestock and the latter satisfying the needs of the animals and some poorer families for the otherwise scarce commodity of salt. The countless springs — including a number of hot springs — and the melted snow and glacier waters, flowing from the *jelgalar* into the plateau and then following drainage courses through various tributaries, both in Afghan and Russian territory to the *Amu Darya* (Oxus River) — all constitute a very vital part of the ecosystem in the Pamirs.

This area was on the highway of communication and trade between China and Central and Southwestern Asia, the Middle East, and Europe for many centuries. Until as recently as thirty or forty years ago the Wakhan Corridor and the high valleys of the Afghan Pamirs served as the main gateway of trade and communication between the two adjacent societies of Russian and Afghan Turkistan to the west, and the area of the headwaters of the Kashghar River and the oasis of Kashghar and Yarkand (formerly known as Chinese Turkistan) to the east. However, at the present time it is one of the most remote areas in the Republic of Afghanistan, far from the main lines of communication. The time required to travel into the Pamirs from the Afghan capital of Kabul may vary from eighteen to thirty days depending upon the season, road conditions, and availability of the various modes of transportation (such as bus, truck, horse, or other pack animal). The actual distance in kilometers from the district center of Wakhan (Khandud) to the furthest point in the Pamirs does not exceed 200 kilometers, but the travel time on horseback is five to eight days for the Great Pamir, and ten to twelve days for the Little Pamir.

The banks of the Oxus River, and the Wakhan (one of its major tributaries in the corridor) are the only inhabitable areas suitable for farming. These areas are occupied by a group of impoverished Wakhi peasants, who are mixed farmers and livestock breeders of goats, *gadek* [a small, native sheep], donkeys, horses, yaks, common cattle, and Bactrian camels. However, only a few families own much livestock of any kind, although most families do own some plots of land close to their dispersed hamlets. Their agricultural activities, unlike those practiced in the lower altitude valleys and plains, are not affected by the annual rainfall or available water. Rather they are strongly influenced by the high altitude topography and the prolonged, cold winters. Together these conditions produce a short growing season of three to four months. The agricultural zone in the corridor begins at about 8,800 feet at the Oxus River Basin and stops at an elevation slightly above 11,000 feet in the Wakhan River Valley. Wheat, barley, lentils, millet, and an oil seed are grown. The Wakhi produce no vegetables. However, during the past few years, some

civil and military personnel stationed in this area have introduced potatoes, carrots, and onions with very impressive results. The Wakhi crops are often destroyed by an early frost, and sometimes plowing and sowing is delayed by the long winters. Unlike lower altitude, agricultural regions in Afghanistan, dry farming is not possible here since precipitation is always in the form of snow. This snow gives an ample source of water for irrigation, which is necessary because of the porous nature of the thin, sandy topsoil.

The geographical area of the Pamir plateau lying beyond the agricultural zone is at best marginal. The available resources for the support of the human populations can be best utilized only through pastoral adaptations, and the raising of particular types and breeds of animals — fat-tailed sheep, goats, yaks, horses, and Bactrian double-humped camels. Altitudes at the inhabited areas range from 13,000–16,000 feet and higher, at temperatures as low as −40°F and below 32°F most of the year. It is extremely fatiguing even to the acclimatized permanent residents, and at times to the animals. For the visitor from lower altitudes, the hazards of altitude sickness, known as *tutak* [severe headache, nausea, and short-windedness], and insomnia are quite dangerous and can be fatal. The traditional Kirghiz love of breeding and herding horses has been prevented by the ill effects of high elevation, thus increasing their dependency upon neighboring peasants and itinerant traders from lower elevations for horses, among other things, as mount and pack animals.

The Kirghiz, traditionally a Turkic pastoralist group from the region of the Altai Mountains (Krader 1966) to the northeast of this area, have been inhabiting the Afghan Pamirs for at least 200 years. They believe that less than a century ago there were about thirty Kirghiz *oey* [yurt, family, household] units regularly using *Aqsu onderi* only as their summer camping grounds, and perhaps half as many families were using the Great Pamir area. The number of animals owned by the Kirghiz *oey* units at the time did not average more than seventy or eighty head per *oey* unit. They were practicing a vertical form of extensive pasturage in their annual seasonal cycle, spending only a short period of each year in these high altitudes and moving to lower and warmer portions of the valleys (i.e., Russian and Sinkiang Pamirs) for the rest of the year.

The Kirghiz socioeconomic and cultural orientation in the early periods was more toward the cities of Andijan, Kashgar, and Yarkand, in what used to be the urban centers of Russian and Eastern or Chinese Turkistan (Younghusband 1896; Shor 1955). The Kirghiz rarely involved themselves with the Wakhi peasant of the Wakhan Corridor of Afghanistan and seldom initiated any kind of trading activities, although traders from Wakhan and other parts of Badakhshan and Afghanistan were making their way through the Pamirs to the aforementioned urban

centers. The nature of Kirghiz trading (and other sociocultural relationships) with the peasants and the urbanites of Russian and Chinese Turkistan is well preserved in the minds of the Kirghiz through their oral tradition of regularly recited *er* [epic songs], and also by the remains of the material goods brought in prior to the communist takeover of the area. These goods make up a greater part of their present household utensils, the wooden lattice frames of their yurts, jewelry, and ornaments.

The Afghan Pamirs were ruled by different governments in the past — the local autocratic Turkic Emirates of the Central Asian steppes, the Chinese, and the Russians — before being formally recognized in the Pamir Treaty of 1895 by the Russian and the British Empires as a part of Afghan territory and a buffer zone between the two great powers (Griffiths 1967). This international political diplomacy had no immediate effect upon Kirghiz pastoral nomadic patterns or the flow of trade between northern Afghanistan and Chinese and Russian Turkistan. The Kirghiz maintained their total territorial range of movement and continued to gain economically from trading activities through payments for their services and use of their pack animals by the traders. The other beneficiaries of this long-established trade were the peasant Wakhis.

The first effects of the Treaty of 1895 were felt after the Russian Revolution of 1917. It was during this period that a large number of Kirghiz *oey* units, under the leadership of a head of one of the prominent kinship groups, moved into the Afghan Little Pamir. By 1921 — the time of the expedition of King Mohammed Nadir Shah, then minister of defense for the government of King Amanullah of Afghanistan — the population in the Pamirs had increased to an estimated 2,000 persons (Kushkaki 1923). For a number of years the restriction of movement from the Afghan Pamirs to Russian Turkistan was not strictly imposed. The Kirghiz were given the right to use their traditional pasturage grounds during severe winter conditions in return for a predetermined payment of livestock to the Russian frontier authorities. But by the 1930's the Soviet government had adopted a closed door policy towards the Afghan Kirghiz. This caused the complete loss of a large portion of their pasturage grounds to the Soviet Union. Persistent political pressure both from the Afghan governmental authorities in Badakhshan and the Soviet governmental authorities across the border forced the present *Khan* of the Kirghiz and many members of his community to march out of the Little Pamir in 1946 to the safety of Tagh-Dum Bash Pamir in Chinese Turkistan. The *Khan* and his people showed some interest in farming in the lower valleys of the Sinkiang Pamir in addition to continuing their herding activities. This venture was terminated only two years later by the Chinese Communist takeover of Sinkiang Province. In 1949, when the Chinese Revolution reached this area, the Kirghiz hurriedly returned to the Afghan Little Pamir plateau. Their flight to Afghan

territory marked the end of many centuries of trade and cultural ties between the societies of Chinese Turkistan and the peoples of northern Afghanistan, in general, and the Kirghiz of the Afghan Pamirs, in particular.

These external political developments, beyond the influence of the Kirghiz, created two urgent problems. First is a physical-environmental or territorial problem: the total restriction of their annual seasonal migrations to the confines of a small area ill-suited for year-round occupation, combined with insufficient resources for the increased human and animal population influx from the Russian and Sinkiang Pamirs as a result of the revolutions of 1917 and 1949. Second is a sociocultural or cultural-ecological problem: their very strong socioeconomic and cultural interdependence with the predominantly Turkic and *Sunni* Muslim peasant and urban societies was abruptly broken by the external forces. In the process many individual family members, closely related families, and kinsmen were permanently parted. Therefore, a drastic change in the direction of the Kirghiz trading and other sociocultural relations became necessary. In short, the Kirghiz of the Afghan Pamirs were faced with a total environmental or ecological mishap that they had to survive. Fortunately, they succeeded. It is their readaptive ecological and intracultural strategies that have enabled them to continue a pastoral nomadic way of life and that is the point of interest in this discussion.

Returning to the first problem: the Kirghiz could not expand their territories and reroute their migration patterns south to the then northern tip of the British-Indian Empire (Chitral and Gilgit) because of the lack of easy passage over the high mountains. They were also unwilling to enter non-Muslim territory because of their fear of the infidel Kunjutis who, before the establishment of British rule in the region, had at times crossed the high, partially accessible passes to raid the Kirghiz summer encampments (Younghusband 1896). The only alternative open to the Kirghiz at the time was to seek pasturage ground in the Wakhan Corridor. That, however, was not negotiable because at the time a few rich Wakhi peasants owned large flocks of sheep and were using the pasturage or claiming the rights over the area between the limits of the agricultural zone and the Pamirs proper. In recent years, however, due both to the loss of animals by many peasants and the tremendous increase of livestock population in the Pamirs, the Kirghiz have gained access to some former Wakhi pasturage grounds. But this has caused added friction to the already strained relationship between the two societies. (I will return to this point later.)

In the arid zone, it is annual rainfall and the presence or absence of water that determines the size of herds and herding groups, patterns of migratory practices, and pasturage use. In the Pamirs it is the topography

(altitude) and the resulting deep snow and thick ice covering much of the ground, except for a brief sixty to seventy-five days' growing season, that influence the herding patterns and migratory practices of the "high altitude" pastoralists. In order to fully utilize the available resources to sustain their pastoralism in the high pasturage, the Kirghiz of Afghanistan have developed the following methods: (1) adaptation to a form of "intensive" pasturage use; (2) introduction of new patterns of annual seasonal movements; (3) improvement of pasturage by irrigation, where possible; and (4) establishment of rules for the rights of private ownership of pasturage and camping grounds by individuals, families, and small patrilineal groups. The last method, previously alien to the Kirghiz and still in its incipient stage, is a very common cause of disputes and friction between individuals, families, and larger kinship groups.

The Kirghiz, in their intensive pattern of pasturage use and short-distance seasonal cycle, have adopted a kind of pendular course of nomadic movement in the Little Pamir plateau. Their annual movements from one settlement area to another (which may be only two to four times during any year, depending upon the specific situation of *oey* units) are tied very closely to the balance of the animal population, the pasturage resources, the water, and the fuel available at fairly regulated intervals throughout the year. That is, during the winter (November through June, their longest camping time in one place in a year) their *qeshtow* [winter encampments] are scattered in the *kongey* [sunny side of the valley, i.e., the northwest side of the plateau] area. They are usually placed in depressions surrounded by hillocks or next to ridges where the occupants have some protection against the constant, freezing wind. The number of *oey* units per encampment during the winter does not exceed six and frequently is only one or two. This method of dispersing herding units over the available pasturage area, which constitutes less than half the total resources but must be used over the longest period of time (up to nine months out of the year), is a significant adaptive strategy within their intensive system of pasturage utilization.

The arrival of the brief summer (July through mid-September) is much welcomed by the Kirghiz. At this time they end their self-imposed isolation in the dispersed winter camps and move to *yaylaou* [summer encampment] across the valley to the *terskey*,[2] where they rejoin close relatives and friends in concentrated encampments of five to fifteen *oey* units. Protection from wind is not considered a primary factor in their choice of summer camping grounds. Membership in summer camps is

[2] The spatial distance covered by the Kirghiz in their seasonal nomadic movement ranges from fifteen to thirty-five kilometers between their winter and summer encampments, with an altitude variation of from 1,000 feet to over 3,000 feet between the two areas. The actual travel time required is from three to seven or eight hours by horse. Their autumn and spring camping grounds are usually midway between the winter and summer pasturage areas.

quite flexible and indicative of the relaxed, carefree, healthy outlook, and happy mood of the Kirghiz at this time. In general, summer encampments in the Little Pamir assemble in fewer places on the *terskey* side of the plateau, the smaller tributary river valleys, or, in the upper elevations, along the Pamir River tributaries and its source in the Great Pamir.

Before the end of their brief summer, the Kirghiz take two rather laborious preparatory steps for the cold, long and tiring winter ahead. Such tasks require group effort. The first is *chop chapmagh* or cutting, drying, collecting, transporting, and storing of tall grass from the winter encampment grounds which have been cleared and irrigated earlier. Grass is also collected from *qorghan* or cleared patches of land which have been manured and irrigated during the summer, and from the banks of lakes and rivers where tall grass grows. This constitutes the winter fodder for their riding horses, camels, and occasionally sick and weak yaks and sheep or goats. The second task is the making of *kegiz* [felt], which is used to cover the Kirghiz mobile house, the *aq oey* [yurt or white house], or to exchange for their needed grains and other commodities they do not produce.

Group help is also sought during moving and resettlement to their autumn and winter encampments. The brief thirty to forty days' residence in autumn camping grounds in *suni boyi* is devoted to additional preparations for the long, monotonous winter months. These activities include gathering and storing fuel, and repairing corral and other mud and stone shelters in the winter quarters. The most important task of all is making and repairing horse and camel covers and other travel gear for the upcoming journey some male members of each *oey* must make to the Wakhi peasant area to buy needed agricultural products and market commodities (two to four times each winter, taking twenty-five to forty-five days for each round trip).

The loss of former pastoral territory by the Kirghiz of Afghanistan was only one of many pressures. They have overcome the territorial difficulties by the means discussed above. However, there were also other losses. The Kirghiz, like all other Turkic people, are devoted followers of the *Sunni* sect of Islam, as much as their nomadic lifestyle permits. For the Kirghiz tribal society in geographical isolation, Islam serves as a very effective means of education and socialization. It also has been a strong factor in local unity, as well as identity with the larger Muslim communities of Central Asia in a continuing struggle with the non-Muslim Chinese, the Russians, and the neighboring pagan tribes of Chitral and Hunza in North Pakistan (Younghusband 1896). The Central Asian urban centers were the source of Islamic teachers (*Mullahs*), craftsmen, and specialists. These centers also provided training facilities for those Kirghiz men who themselves chose to learn Islamic Sharia or to acquire

certain craft skills such as blacksmithing, goldsmithing, shoemaking, and carpentry. On their return to Kirghiz society these individuals acted as part-time specialists. Thus, they enhanced the continuation of the sociocultural exchange between the local community and the larger society.

The closure of the borders and the discontinuation of contact between the Kirghiz and the centers with which they had a long-established cultural orientation caused a kind of cultural suffocation in Kirghiz society. The ill-effects of this loss of contact are evident in the gradual disappearance of all the skilled artisans and religious specialists (*Mullahs* and *Bakhshis*). The Kirghiz for a long time remained reluctant to establish or extend direct cultural relations with the rest of Afghan society. Despite the fact that the specialists trained in Central Asia have died or are nearing old age and that the younger generations are denied access to the traditional training centers, they still hesitate to go to the cities of Afghanistan. The reasons for this hesitation are many: (1) fear of the central and local government brought about by unpleasant dealings and experiences with petty and corrupt officials under frontier conditions (Shor 1955); (2) fear of illness from the "heat" of lowland towns and cities; (3) the linguistic, cultural, and ethnic differences with the neighboring peasant Wakhi population and the peoples of the distant towns and cities of northern Afghanistan.

The Kirghiz, like other nomadic societies, consider the presence of any external powers as a threat to their integrity, and their fear in this instance is based on two factors. First, moving out of the Pamirs means for them the total submission of the Kirghiz to the rule of the central government, including compulsory conscription of their young men in the Afghan army and the payment of surcharge taxes from which they are presently exempted because of the severe conditions under which they live. Second, the Kirghiz have been keen observers of the unpleasant experiences of the many rich Wakhi families in the corridor who were misused and robbed by the corrupt petty officials in this isolated region. The details and nature of these practices require a separate paper.

The Kirghiz fear of the lowland "heat," intensified by the existing linguistic, ethnic, and cultural differences between them and the village-town dwellers, is based on another historical incident. Some thirty years ago, about the same time as the people of the Little Pamir fled to Sinkiang, a group of twenty-five or thirty Kirghiz *oey* from the Afghan Great Pamir ended their nomadic way of life by moving out of the Wakhan Corridor and settling in central parts of Badakhshan Province. The decision was made because of raids by the Russians on their encampments and was compounded by a *joot* [severe spring snow blizzard with high wind gusts]. Many died of disease and others traded their animals to buy patches of land which they did not know how to till and

sow. Only a few individuals were able to return to the safety of the high valleys, and four families now practice mixed farming and herding in a relatively high valley in Zebak subdistrict. Those who ventured into the towns of northern Afghanistan as far as Kunduz and Baghlan turned to laboring and could not return for reasons of pride. But recently a few of their children have returned to tell the tale of their failure. For these reasons the Kirghiz firmly cling to the freedom of the high Pamirs.

To the dismay of the Kirghiz they find that they have had to depend upon the Wakhi, whom they refer to as *sart* [non-Turkic], for their needed agricultural commodities. Kirghiz, as *Sunni* Muslims, have a strong feeling of contempt for the *Ismailite* Wakhi, and consider them to be infidels. Nevertheless, the Kirghiz are obliged to stay in the homes of the Wakhi when they come to trade livestock products for grain, but they refuse food cooked by the Wakhi, accepting only tea.

Economically, the Kirghiz are much better off than the impoverished Wakhi, whose short-season agricultural crops often suffer from natural calamities, especially early frost. Most of these peasants have to look for temporary work elsewhere for at least part of the year. Some of them go to the towns or lower altitude villages to take jobs, while many seek summer herding jobs with the Kirghiz. In some cases poor peasant families have moved to the Pamirs to serve a rich Kirghiz. Some Wakhi who have earned many animals over the years have chosen to stay permanently as pastoralists rather than return to their villages. A few Tajik and Uzbek traders from towns and villages of Badakhshan also have recently joined the pastoral nomadic Kirghiz of the Pamirs permanently. This role reversal for the peasants and townsmen, otherwise unknown in peasant-pastoralist relationships in Central and Southwestern Asia, except in Tibet (Ekvall 1968), is due to the particular ecology of high altitude conditions to which both societies have adapted. Their close association over three or four decades has persuaded both groups to learn to speak the language of the other. One distinct disadvantage of this association, for the Kirghiz, has been the introduction of opium use to some Kirghiz by the Wakhi, many of whom are habitual users. Despite intensive economic interaction a mutual, latent feeling of disdain nevertheless persists.

In response to all the pressures imposed upon the Kirghiz, they have quite efficiently and effectively manipulated their social structural system to keep their pastoral society intact and prevent its membership from drifting into peasantry or dissipating into the urban centers. The Kirghiz social structure is organized on the basis of a highly developed form of agnatic descent principles. They acknowledge a common descendancy from four brothers named Teyet, Kesak, Qepchaq, and Naiman, which are also the names of the four major kinship groups referred to by the Kirghiz of the Afghan Pamirs as *chung* or *zor oroq* [great or major seed or

root]. Each of the *chung oroqlar* [maximal lineages] has four additional segmentary levels, hierarchically arranged from less inclusive to more inclusive membership groups. All levels of these kinship groups are referred to by the same Kirghiz term, *oroq* [seed or root] preceded by the modifiers *zor* or *chung* [great or major] and *kechek* [minor, small].

The smallest socioeconomically independent herding unit in Kirghiz society is the *oey*. *Oey* means both the physical structure of a yurt and a group of people living in it, i.e., a family and/or household as well. An *oey* may be made up of a nuclear family (most often), or take the form of a composite family of the polygynous type (Murdock 1949), containing two to fifteen individuals. Therefore, a Kirghiz individual can always identify himself as a member of an *oey* unit, at least five levels of paternally defined kinship groups of expanding sizes, and ultimately one of the four major *oroq* in order to have the much needed support of these groups when and if it is called for. These structural units serve as a point of reference for one's identity whenever in question, and also operate on the basis of "segmentary opposition" like those of the Nuer society (Evans-Pritchard 1940).

The political structure of Kirghiz society is embedded in the hierarchical arrangements of the agnatic kinship groups through seniority in the order of birth in ascending generation. The nonhereditary ranks of *Khan* [chief], whose rule encompasses the entire Kirghiz population of the area of the Afghan Pamirs, *Be* [head of a localized descent group], and *Aqsaqal* [head of minimal patrilineage group(s)], are achieved by those senior members of the relevant kinship group who can gain the unanimous consent of the membership on the basis of certain prescribed personality attributes. Such office holders, acting individually or in concert, resolve through mediation all local judicial and sociopolitical matters. The recently created office of *Qaryadar* [village headman] by the central government of Afghanistan has been incorporated in the office of the *Khan*. That office holder mediates between the Kirghiz and the local and central authorities in the event of local difficulties, and also implements government orders among the Kirghiz.

Wealth in Kirghiz society, as in all pastoral nomadic groups, is based on herd size and the accumulation of movable, negotiable goods by the *oey*. In this case, wealth means owning a large number of fat-tailed sheep and yaks, since the number of Bactrian camels is negligible and owning a horse is a virtual necessity for every family to transport grains from the peasant area and for other daily routines. Wealth as such is concentrated in only a few hands. The 333 *oey* occupying the Afghan Pamirs herd about 40,000 head of sheep and goats, and about 4,000 head of yaks. Of these 16,000 sheep and goats and about 700 yaks are owned by only one *oey* unit, that of the Kirghiz *Khan*. Thirteen other *oey* own 17,200 sheep and goats and about 1,200 yaks of the total animal population, leaving

228 *oey* units without any sheep or goats, 105 herding units without sheep, goats, or a yak, and 70 households without any animals at all (Table 1).

The above figures portray Kirghiz society as one of economic extremes. There are only a few families who are very rich and many who are very poor. If no measures were taken internally by the Kirghiz society, the process of sedentarization of a great many families should have occurred. However, given the ecological conditions it is impossible for any single *oey* to be able to raise a very large herd.[3] Therefore, the Kirghiz have devised two systems of dispersing the concentrated wealth of livestock among the poor.

1. *Saghun* system: under this system poor families who do not own animals and do not have the ability to herd livestock year-round are provided by the rich *oey* units with ten to thirty ewes and goats, with their lambs and kids, shortly after the lambing season, or one or two yak cows with their calves. These animals are given only for the use of their milk during the spring and summer and are to be returned to their owners by autumn. The poor are also the beneficiaries of an annual payment of alms in livestock or goods by the rich to cover their other needs.

2. *Amanat* system: under this system a large number of animals ranging from ten to over 500 head of sheep and goats and one to twenty yaks are given to the poor *oey* units according to their needs and herding ability. The herders exercise all the rights over the products (milk, wool, and fuel) which can be earned from the herd while they are given charge of raising them. But the rich Kirghiz retains the right of ownership over the herd. Reciprocally, the herders must give an account of the animals they are herding to the owner and must show an increase in the size of the herd to ensure the continuation of the arrangement. It must be made clear, however, that this arrangement is not the same as hiring an individual or a family as shepherds. While over 17,000 sheep and goats are herded by the owners with the aid of shepherds, over 22,000 head of sheep and goats are distributed to families under the *amanat* system.

In the allocation of these herds to *oey* units, the agnatic segmentary descent principles and affinal ties are given thorough consideration by the rich Kirghiz, although often the practice is extended beyond the immediate kinship groups to distant ones. Since these rich men often hold a political rank of some sort, they will gain assured support from clients. This dispersal of livestock throughout the Pamirs has another great advantage for the rich herd owner. The high altitude means that ecological

[3] A herd of sheep and goats ranging from 200 to 500 requires a man with a dog to assist him. Herds of 500 to 1,200 require two men and more dogs. Kirghiz shepherds often have a yak for a mount. Yaks do not require intensive care for their pasturage, unless the herd is over fifty head.

Table 1. Distribution of livestock ownership among the Kirghiz of the Afghan Pamirs

No. of *oey* units	No. of sheep owned by each unit	Total sheep owned by all units	No. of yaks owned by each unit	Total yaks owned by all units	No. of horses owned by each unit	Total horses owned by all units	No. of camels owned by each unit	Total camels owned by all units
1		16,400		720		15		18
6	1310–3640	12,285	40–277	954	1–6	22	1–7	23
7	500–940	4,920	12–60	214	1–3	15	1–10	22
13	120–430	2,755	8–70	318	1–4	23	1–5	17
14	50–100	1,090	2–30	161	1–2	18	1	1
64	1–40	1,150	1–25	600	1–2	82	1	2
123	—	—	1–40	577	1–3	105	—	—
35	—	—	—	—	1–2	38	—	—
70	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
333		38,600		3,544		318		83

variation, even within a short distance, is sometimes enormous. A devastating blizzard that might wipe out the livestock population in one area of the Pamirs may not occur in another. Thus, if the animals are killed off in one area, an owner will have a place to turn to replenish his self-perpetuating capital. This has happened to the Kirghiz many times within living memory.

This mechanism, which has become a part of the Kirghiz cultural system, functions quite well to sustain the concentration and still allow distribution of wealth among all strata of this society (Spooner 1973a), thereby preventing the drift of the poor from pastoral nomadic life to sedentary agricultural or urban living. There are no apparent moves by the rich to leave the snow and cold at the "roof of the world." Some rich Kirghiz have bought agricultural land from the Wakhi and are absentee landlords. At least two of the rich Kirghiz have an established share in one of the provincial companies in Badakhshan, but they have no intention of leaving the plateau land of the Pamirs. With the exception of the *Khan* and two or three others, no Kirghiz have made any entrepreneurial moves to become established traders or to go out to the urban centers themselves to sell their livestock.

To conclude this discussion I would like to draw attention to two main points. First, in the Wakhan Corridor region of Afghanistan the processes of sedentarization of pastoral nomads and the nomadization of sedentary peasants cannot be fully explained on the basis of hard economic facts alone. Among the Kirghiz pastoralists, where society is made up of the very rich or the very poor, sedentarization does not occur at all.[4] This is in contrast to the view of Spooner:

> A nomad whose flock is reduced so low . . . that he cannot live from it may drift into nearby villages as a day wage laborer. Or . . . a nomad whose flock grows beyond a size that he can herd *himself* may sell the excess animals and invest the proceeds in land. Having invested in fixed property he becomes interested in its welfare and so becomes attracted towards a settled life (1973b:10, emphasis added).

The rich Kirghiz who has bought a little land and made a limited investment in fixed property has neither reduced his number of animals to a size he could herd himself nor dissipated his wealth through "feasting, warfare or other elite consumption" (Barth 1973:19). Instead, through mechanisms of *saghun* and *amanat,* the rich have distributed their herd among the poor, by which means they have arranged not only for the sustenance of the poor pastoralist but made maximum use of the available resources. In addition, they have guarded themselves against the total

[4] However, some sedentarization of the Kirghiz may well have occurred prior to the Russian and Chinese revolutions.

loss of their herds while ensuring the maximization of their capital — the herd — within the pastoral nomadic way of life.

Similarly, those Wakhi who become pastoral nomads do not take their own animals to the high plateau (Spooner 1973b:10). Rather, they are those impoverished individuals or families who go to the Pamirs empty-handed in search of work among the Kirghiz pastoralists. Thus, though the argument as typified by Spooner may be historically sound, as in the case of the arid zone nomadization of peasants, it does not hold in this case. Of course, the full extent of this process cannot be understood without consideration of the realities of history, polity, and the prevailing ethnic, linguistic, religious, and other sociocultural systems in the region.

Second, the nature of peasant and pastoralist relations in this case is very much a function of the topography (high altitude) of the Wakhan Corridor and the Afghan Pamirs. In the future a much more extensive anthropological study of high altitude societies in particular will be necessary before a comprehensive theoretical and methodological model for the explanation of the variations between arid zone and high altitude nomadism can be formulated.

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Correlation of Contradictions: A Tibetan Semantic Device

ROBERT B. EKVALL

By the stubborn facts and forces of geography the land of Tibet is wedged between the lands of India and China. The glacier and snow giants of the Himalayas, forming a long east-west chain, make a wall of imprisonment or — depending on one's viewpoint — of protection to mark its southern limits. The Kunlun mountains and deserts of the north seal it off from Chinese Central Asia and, although the plateau thus delimited tilts eastward towards China proper, distance and the successive chasms of the "great trench-rivers of Asia" create an almost equally effective barrier or shield. This plateau homeland of the Tibetan people, rock-ribbed from south to north by a succession of snowy ranges interspersed with internal drainage basins, has been given many names, such as "Roof of the World," yet is best described by the Tibetan name "Region of the Glacier-Snow Mountains."

Throughout history a varied assortment of peoples have lived in different parts of the plateau. Some moved on while others left behind remnants or barely discernible enclaves. The ethnic origins or affiliations of the T'ang-hsiang, Yang-tung, Sum-pa, and others are unknown or only

The sources upon which this paper is based — uncited in footnotes but most real — are to be found in: (a) the experiences, memories, and written observations of eight years of living and discussing with Tibetans in northeast Tibet; (b) over one thousand hours of seminar-type discussion with four Tibetan research collaborators, identified and evaluated in "A Tibetan seminar on Tibetan society and culture" (*Current Anthropology*, October 1963); and (c) one year of fact finding among the nearly one thousand Tibetans in Switzerland, which included some rewarding discussion of language, and law with one of the tutors of the Dalai Lama.

I am also grateful to the Wenner-Gren Foundation and the National Science Foundation for various grants; to the Far Eastern Institute of the University of Washington for extensive opportunity which made possible the virtually continuous research cited above; and in particular to a recent National Science Foundation grant for intensive research in Tibetan law — concepts and practices.

tentatively identified; but those of Hor, Sog Po, Dru Gu, and A ZHa are traceable with some degree of certainty to Turanian, Mongolian, Turkic, and Uiguric sources. The Ch'iang people, believed by some to be the true nuclear proto-Tibetans, moved westward and southwestward onto the plateau, leaving traces at points along the way. In central-western Tibet, the mysterious ZHang ZHung kingdom competed with the nascent Tibetan empire; as late as the last quarter of the seventh century it had its own *written* language and books on religion and philosophy which engaged the efforts of the Tibetan translators of that time. Yet despite all this, it is mysterious because it vanished completely; it was racially assimilated, its power structure dismantled, and its language forgotten and replaced by Tibetan.

This process of Tibetanization went on throughout the entire plateau (and continues to this day in fringe areas) until the unchanging factors of geography were correlated with and matched by the everchanging forces of demography. The Tibetan plateau then became, to its very edges, with spillovers beyond, the habitat of the Tibetan people.

The spearhead and chief strength-factor of this long and successful process of cultural conquest was language, which, it is true, was linked to and strengthened by a symbiotic relationship with the Buddhist religion. In Mongolia, for example, monks learned Tibetan just as German monks of the Middle Ages learned Latin, and for much the same reasons. Even now the great majority of Mongolian personal names are recognizably Tibetan terms of religious significance.

The religious factor, however, is shared with the many peoples of diverse cultures in the world who believe in Buddhism. The Tibetan language, on the other hand, belongs solely to the Tibetans. It is thus the unique instrument (or more aptly weapon) used by the Tibetans in a one-way acculturative process to Tibetanize their neighbors. How this process operates may be seen even now in a number of areas in eastern Tibet inhabited by Mongol, Jarong, Bolotsi, Tsako, and other enclaves.

Language is felt by the Tibetans themselves to be the important criterion upon which, in their search for assurance of unity, they base their self-image and self-identification as a people. On the plane of *being*, human existence is thought to be a triad of body, speech and mind; on the plane of *doing*, it is a triad of deeds, words, and thoughts. In their universe of values language is the great fact of man's endowment and his culture. It is thus very natural, yet most significant that on the occasion of a watershed experience in Tibetan history, when a Tibetan religious leader went to intercede with Godan, grandson of Ghenghis Khan, and sought to halt the invasion of Tibet — then already at full force — he should have represented his mission as being on behalf of "all who speak the Tibetan language." Among the crumbling fragments of the onetime

Tibetan empire there remained at that time only the criterion, or bond, of language to symbolize unity.

Having said this much about the geography of a wedge plateau, the demography of a people living on, and mostly limited to, that plateau, and a culture centered to a considerable degree on language, we are tempted to speculate about what might have happened to such a people and culture if their habitat, instead of being a barrier area, had been a passage area similar to the trough along which the Silk Road was routed where the great west-east movements of conquest, trade, and culture change took place. As it is, their self-image and distinct identity are well maintained, even though they are wedged between what they identify as the "land of law/order" on the one side, and the "land of religion/cosmology" on the other. We know them as the two great power structures and cultural systems of Asia which divide a continent between them, the Sinitic and the Indic; one or the other has placed its stamp on all Asian countries. Tibet has been stamped by both yet remains different and in-between; one of the reasons is language.

The Tibetan language is generally considered the lesser moiety of the Sino-Tibetan language family although until ablautism is scientifically demonstrated, some may challenge that classification. However that may be, Tibetan does resemble Chinese in being basically monosyllabic and strongly idiomatic in usage. Each syllable is very much an isolated semantic unit, lacking intrinsic parts-of-speech differentiation. As such a unit it has a degree of completeness and independence, although particles have lesser autonomy. However, in combination with other such units — all assuming parts-of-speech roles according to need — satisfactory and richly varied communication of phrase and sentence length and content takes place.

An essential element in this kind of communication is the creation and use of compounds. Semantic units, in whatever parts-of-speech roles they are cast, are freely compounded by nongrammatical juxtapositioning into two-syllable forms. There are a few atypical, but very useful, three- and four-syllable forms but they are not treated in this paper. This compounding is not a case of concept *a* plus concept *b*; nor is it a case of concept *a* being grammatically modified by or modifying concept *b*; rather, it is a case of concept *a* being merged with concept *b* to metamorphose into a new concept, concept *c*.

This device gives to language usage an astonishing, even bewildering, fluidity and offers possibilities of virtually unlimited variation of nuance. The nearest analogue to this process is found in the manner and results of a painter when using colors. When he mixes yellow and blue he gets neither streaked yellow and blue nor differing shades of yellow or blue. What he does get is green — a new and true color and not a shade of anything else. There would appear to be no grammar in the handling of

colors. This is not to imply that Tibetan does not have a grammar. Indeed, in the seventh century, spoken Tibetan was straitjacketed within a complex grammar closely modeled on that grammar of all grammars, the Sanskrit one. This process of grammatical hairsplitting by Tibetan grammarians, seeking to outdo Sanskrit itself, coincided with the borrowing of a syllabary derived from Sanskrit for reducing the Tibetan language to writing, and the acceptance of a religion whose books were written in Sanskrit, which made it necessary for Tibetans to learn Sanskrit in order to translate the vast treasure of the Buddhist scriptures.

Under this three-pronged Sanskritic impact the Tibetan language split into two type-forms: *CHos sKad* (religion/cosmology language) and *PHal sKad* (common language). The basic vocabulary of the two is essentially identical; but the grammar and syntax of *CHos sKad* is the form in which the great majority of religious and philosophical books have been written and is, moreover, a copy (labored or unconscious) of Sanskrit grammar and syntax patterns. *PHal sKad,* however, in spoken and written discourse, maintains the continuity of the old forms: disregard of grammatical distinctions and relationships; use of idiomatic syntax; and a great reliance on compounding.

Compounding is multivariant and, besides its use in the correlation of contradictions, serves a variety of other purposes: the simple one of creating emphasis; the formation of new substantives to match new artifacts; the indicating of different aspects of psychological analysis; and the linking of the general to the particular to sharpen the focus of meaning. In this compounding all parts of speech, not necessarily matched, are used. Examples of the various uses of compounding are: *mTHu-sTob* [might-strength] i.e. [power at its greatest] (synonymous noun-noun, simple emphasis device); *rGyang-mTHong* [distance-see] i.e. [binoculars] (noun-verb, new substantive to match new artifact); *Sa-ZHing* [earth-field] i.e. [cultivated land] (noun-noun, from the general of "earth" to the particular of "field"); *rGyug-aDur* [run-trot] i.e. [trot as gait] (verb-verb, from the general of "run" to the particular of "trot"); *Mig-Ser* [eye-yellow] i.e. [envy/jealousy] (noun-adjective, physio-psychological analysis); *NGa-rGyal* [I-conquer] i.e. [pride] (pronoun-verb, psychological cause-effect analysis); *Rang-bZHin* [selfness-face] i.e. [disposition/nature] (noun-noun, psychological analysis); *Rang-dBang* [selfness-power] i.e. [freedom] (noun-noun, psychological analysis); *Rang-Don* [selfness-meaning/interest] i.e. [selfishness] (noun-noun, psychological analysis); *gZHan-Don* [otherness meaning/interest] i.e. [altruism] (noun-noun, psychological analysis).

The last two examples in this series of multivariant compoundings are not instances of the correlation of contradictions, but in themselves they do point to and define by analysis the opposing poles of action motiva-

tion: the altruistic versus the selfish; the private interest versus the public interest; the individual benefit versus the group (which may be extended to include all) benefit. It is not cogent to the particular theme of this paper to discuss at any length Tibetan attempts to reconcile or correlate, in any manner, these two fundamental contradictions. Studies of religious observances and, in particular, of pilgrimage and its motivations, do suggest that, by invoking the all-embracing compassion of the Bodhisattva for all sentient beings, sublimation is offered as the causal agent whereby the meanness of selfishness is transmuted into the nobleness of altruism.

Six examples listed below of adjectival compounding of the contradictory exemplify the dialectic of the correlation of contradictions and its application in semantics. In each instance, the two components of the compound are starkly contradictory — or at least mutually exclusive — yet when merged with each other into one concept their very contrariness demands a conceptualization which will enfold both on equal terms and push towards a higher level of abstraction as a result of the dialectic process.

This dialectic, which is not the Hegelian one of thesis and antithesis, nor the Marxist one which stresses the conflict of contradictions, permeates much of Tibetan (as well as Chinese) conceptualization and semantics and related aspects of language usage. Its application bypasses the dilemma inherent in a strictly either-or approach, and its indirect influence pervades Tibetan thinking, permitting ambiguities in speech as to person, number, gender, tense, subject-object, etc. The six examples of this dialectic are as follows:

1. *CHe-CHung* [large-small] i.e. [size]; adjective-contradiction adjective; conceptualization melding contradictory perceptual characterizations of concrete referents into unity, thereby achieving a more generalized higher level of abstraction.
2. *THo-dMan* [high-low] i.e. [height]; adjective-contradiction adjective; conceptualization melding contradictory perceptual characterizations of concrete referents into unity, thereby achieving a more generalized higher level of abstraction.
3. *Ring-THung* [long-short] i.e. [length]; adjective-contradiction adjective; conceptualization melding contradictory perceptual characterizations of concrete referents into unity, thereby achieving a more generalized higher level of abstraction.
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tions of concrete referents into unity, thereby achieving a more generalized higher level of abstraction.

6. *bZang-NGan* [good-bad] i.e. [quality]; adjective-contradiction adjective; conceptualization melding contradictory value-judgment characterizations of concrete referents into unity, thereby achieving a more generalized higher level of abstraction.

The ultimate example of how meaning can be developed by compounding and be refined to abstract and high ethical levels is found in the juxtapositioning of *rGyu* and *aBras,* two words, by themselves, of basic down-to-earth denotations but with far-reaching, surprising and significant connotations and histories. The core meaning of *rGyu*, the first component of the compound, is "substance" both in the material sense and in the sense that is much more intangible, beyond mere wealth, as when someone is known as a "man of substance." It is "quality" stemming from its origins as when — to use a marketplace argument — the texture of a piece of cloth is called in question and linked with choice, clean wool, finely spun thread, and appropriate warp; it is "guts" in a literal sausage-making context, thus showing up in colic identification; it sums up the "ingredients" in the making of beer; when attached to a verbal root it is the projected promise of the future tense; when compounded with *sKar* [star], it identifies the constellations through which the moon passes to make them the fate stars of astrology.

Throughout these and many other semantic permutations *rGyu* retains a basic invariant: some aspect or degree of causality, in its active function of *causing* rather than being caused, and thus fit to stand alone and represent "cause" in its primary sense of independent first causation (as distinguished from dependent secondary causation).

The core meaning of *aBras,* on the other hand, is simply "rice" as a particular cereal and, by logical extension, at one remove from a particular crop or yield. The word has virtually none of the associative connotations such as are attached to *rGyu.* Resemblances in color, size, and shape make it do duty as the descriptive word for small saddle-blisters on a horse's back; and it does, indeed, become more generalized in the compound *aBras-Bu* [rice progeny] meaning [fruitage], which applies to nuts, berries, fruits, and grain in-the-head. Even in this compound, rice loses its particularity and becomes somewhat of a representative symbol. Except as an imported cereal sold in the markets, rice as a real crop or yield does not belong to Tibet. If grown at all it is found only in small pockets of cultivation of the valley floors of the Salween and Mekong rivers in the farthest southeastern corner of the land. Why should it, instead of barley, which is the true "staff of life" of the land, represent crop and yield? Confronted with this anomaly, the Tibetans hark back to mythic and legendary themes, suggesting that rice was the first grain known to man since, in value, it leads all other grains.

Parenthetically the occurrence of *aBras* [rice] in place-names is at times tantalizingly suggestive and my own puzzlement is shared (with wry amusement and makeshift explanations) by my Tibetan friends. For example a bench-line plain along the Yellow River, at 34°N with an altitude of approximately 12,000 feet — more than 1,000 feet higher than where even barley is now grown at that latitude — is called *aBras-sKye THang* [rice-sprout plain]. This is, in itself, something of a contradiction or at least an improbability. Possibly in this and other similar instances rice is either a surrogate name for some other unknown grain or is entirely symbolic.

Unquestionably it is symbolic, and solely symbolic, when it becomes *aBras* [effect] when it is matched with *rGyu* [cause] in the compound *rGyu-aBras* [cause-effect]. In one sense, it is a familiar compound, having its own place in the semantics of English language usage; but in the context of the correlative dialectic and what it can achieve (see earlier discussion), its conceptual meaning, or meanings and disparate levels, is certain to be a quantum jump in conceptualization.

As an illustrative analogy, a case-in-point from the Chinese language is here of some value. In the ideographic writing of that language, the ideograph for the concept of harmony is a compound of two concrete referents with symbolic connotations. Side by side, in balance, and written from left to right, the graphs for "crop/harvest" and "mouth" represent resultant "harmony." "Crop/harvest" is relatively self-explanatory when redefined as "supply"; "mouth" needs some explanation as to its symbolic use. In many contexts it stands for "person," e.g. "in my household eight mouths" but those eight do need to be fed and mouth thus can also stand for need or "demand." "Supply" and "demand" adequately balanced, become "harmony" — personal and societal.

In the compounded concept of "cause-effect" and what it signifies, the dialectic of the correlation of contradictions is somewhat modified. Cause and effect are not immutable contradictions; rather, in the entire universe of change of every kind and degree, and at every level, they are semantically opposed yet complementary — as means and ends — in the cyclical and unending process of change. As a concept, the compound has two levels of meaning; it operates on the level of fairness and on the level of justice. It is at the apex of a semantic triangle, yet in Tibetan, it has no particularized name of its own, only the compounded concepts of *rGyu* [cause] and *aBras* [effect]. These two base corners of the triangle constitute its semantic surrogate, pointing towards and defining its existence. Yet from it uses and contexts, we can define it and name it in English as "fairness/justice."

The dialectic which correlates contradictory or disparate concepts has, in this instance, not only raised meaning to a higher level of abstraction but to the ultimate level of ethical values according to which, in the

semantic field of fairness, worthiness or worthlessness, fitness or unfitness, and honesty or dishonesty are defined; in the realm of justice, it is where rightness or wrongness are judged. At both levels, the concept, derived by compounding, is the criterion or standard by which characterization takes place.

The concept of *rGyu-aBras* as "fairness" is probably the more ancient of the two and more widespread as a necessary accompaniment to an extended range of human interaction. It stands for: fairness in the marketplace — value stated or questioned, and price asked or given; fairness in social relations — decisions made or concessions granted in problems of inheritance, marriage, divorce, assignment of role, cognizance of status fitness, recognition of need, deference to self-image, and much else.

The concept of *rGyu-aBras* as "justice," which is the final individual and societal criterion of right and wrong is most invoked in the all-important arena of social control. Prior to the Chinese take-over of Tibet, three systems of law (i.e. social-control devices) coexisted, forming an uneven pattern of distribution and effectiveness throughout Tibetan society: (a) the primal law of individual or in-group reprisal; (b) the system of mediated consensus settlement, substituting indemnification for reprisal; and (c) juridically imposed adjudication. Despite sharp differences among all three, they were not mutually exclusive. Reprisal could subside into mediation at any stage in its course, or adjudication might intervene. But reprisal had one fatal defect because, without recourse to mediation, it could not forestall seriatim counterreprisal. Mediation's best pressure leverage towards agreement was fear of reprisal. In at least one well-known instance, adjudication was mediation in disguise — with official posture and mask — to give it the semblance of jurisprudence in action. In each of the three systems, all stages, options, procedures, decisions, and results were scrutinized and characterized, in approval or disapproval, according to the criterion of "justice."

For reprisal law to be characterized as "having justice," such reprisal should be in kind: human life for human life; taking of hostages for hostages taken; seizure of livestock for livestock rustled; impounding of possessions for possessions pilfered. It should also be proportionate: the killer killed, *not* his entire family along with him; nor the entire herd of horses driven off for a few cattle or sheep taken; and so forth. It should also not show spiteful or senseless excess: the setting fire to crops, houses, forests or pastures; ill-treatment of women, children, the aged or the sick; and acts of desecration tempting response from the supernatural. When reprisal "having justice" was carried out, the result — equilibrium in a fair balance of "cause-effect" — had justice; yet the balance was precarious and did not last for long, because of the inherent defect, previously mentioned, in the law of reprisal.

In the system of mediated consensus, the second social-control device,

such matters as selection of mediators, arrangements for effecting cessation of hostile activity by both parties, fixing of time and place, forms and degrees of pressure applied, demonstration of nonbias, arguments used, awareness of real rights (however conflicting they might seem), and the terms of the final settlement — all these were subjected to the same scrutinizing evaluation and characterized as "having" or "not having justice." Only those settlements that met this test, being thus buttressed by consensus opinion, were likely to weather the stresses of time and conflicting interests.

The third system of juridical adjudication — more than either of the two preceding systems — laid stress on cause-effect "justice" and, congruently, was held even more closely accountable to that justice in all aspects of its application. Arrest and confinement, treatment in confinement, eliciting and/or forcing of testimony, taking and evaluation of evidence, maintenance of official probity, assessment and imputation of guilt, when and how to appeal by ordeal to the supernatural, interpretation of written codes, rendering of a verdict, and determination and infliction of punishment — all of these were aspects of jurisprudence-in-action which might be labeled as either "having justice," or "not having justice." How those labels were apportioned had much to do with the course of jurisprudence throughout the society.

In adjudication, determination of justice was accountable, moreover, in two directions: downwards, in a generalized and diffused sense, to the parties concerned and public opinion; upwards, in the very specific sense of making the required report to higher authority, which in some instances might be at the very peak of the local power structure.

All these aspects and applications of the *rGyu-aBras* [cause-effect] i.e. [justice] concept, however high they may rise in the field of public morality, are nevertheless involved solely with mundane (profane, as against sacred) concerns. However, in the sacred-profane dichotomy of the Tibetan world view and universe of values, only the sacred is of ultimate permanence and worth. Moreover, it is in the context of this latter system of values that the concept of *rGyu-aBras* [cause-effect] became sublimated to the highest sacred level when it found its place in that tremendous transfer-of-concepts undertaking in which the doctrines, rules, and commentaries of Buddhism — originally formulated in an Indic-Sanskrit idiom — were translated into Tibetan and, in the process, reformulated into a Sino-Tibetan idiom.

At this stage, and prior to any descriptive analysis of that undertaking and its results, it is essential to note an important characteristic of the Tibetan language: it is strongly, even stubbornly, resistant to the use of loanwords, though somewhat more receptive to loansemantics which are then articulated in Tibetan quasi-equivalents. Without doubt there are loanwords in fair number, as in all languages. They are mostly words that

have come into the culture attached to artifacts and animals, e.g. table, whisky, a special variety of Mongolian felt, motor, chair, horse, stallion, camel, lion, etc. This much being granted, the bent towards resistance — whether because of a built-in linguistic idiosyncrasy or because of cultural awareness of language as a power and/or weapon — still remains. Regarding this bent, a Sanskritist colleague, after long argument, once conceded, "certainly a most inhospitable language." Parenthetically, there are probably more Tibetan words in general common English usage (yak, kiang, lama, for example) than there are English words in general common Tibetan usage.

This inhospitable imperviousness to loanwords and to a lesser degree to loanconcepts persisted throughout the two-centuries-long undertaking of translating the Buddhist scriptures (doctrine, rules, exegetic commentary) from Sanskrit into Tibetan. In the Tibetan text, the results of long labor during a period of great change in Tibetan culture, there are few Sanskrit key doctrinal terms (*buddha, dharma, sangha, samadhi,* ejaculatory phrases (analogous to "Ave Maria," etc.) occur as salutations; other Sanskrit words credited with mystical sound-power — meaning is secondary because unknowable — are combined in incantatory charms which are retained without translation in the Tibetan text. More Sanskrit key doctrinal terms (*buddha, dharma, sangha samadhi, bodhisattva, mantra, mandala, vajra, karma,* etc.) are to be found in English writings about Buddhism and related mysticism than in the whole body of Tibetan literature on Buddhism. This is because the terms cited above, together with virtually the entire Sanskritic doctrinal terminology, were translated into Tibetan by using (sometimes singly but more frequently in combination) indigenous and often very commonplace words and the *concepts* for which they stood.

What took place when Buddhism was introduced into Tibet and its concepts transferred into the Tibetan universe of values and language is a most revealing example of what happens to concepts — in terms of change and contraction or expansion of meaning — when they are transferred from culture to culture by the process of translation. How that process operated and what its lessons are, is a challenge to scholarship and one of the unfinished tasks in the field of Tibetology. The challenge has been singularly ignored and the task neglected, possibly because of the disparity between Sanskrit and Tibetan in linguistic status, diffusion, and resources. There has also been a somewhat understandable tendency to consider Tibetan words used in translating as mere convenient vocables which have been emptied of their primary Tibetan meanings and then filled with Sanskrit meanings, thus becoming stand-ins for Sanskrit words and concepts, instead of being true translations.

The Tibetans themselves were acutely aware of the pitfalls of translation with its quandaries and misjudgments. They instituted translation

schools, attempted to standardize terminology, and set guidelines for the work. One of the reasons given for the failure of an earlier attempt to introduce Buddhism was the lack of qualified translators. In a seeming aside, which nevertheless appears to suggest a grave error, it is stated that the word *bodhisattva* had been rendered *Blo-Sems* [intelligence-mind].

The final page of a paper is no place for any attempt to answer a challenge to scholarship or to repair a neglect — such a task requires at least a book, for there are too many examples modified by too many variables. Furthermore, there is only one crowning example which is germane to the theme of this paper. But before analyzing it and showing its relationship to *rGyu-aBras* [cause-effect] a number of other examples is listed here to illustrate the variety of modifications which do take place in translation.

Sanskrit	*Tibetan*	*English*
buddha	*Sang-rGyas* [purified-transcended]	the Buddhahood
bodhisattva	*Byang-CHub-Sems-dPa* [purged-permeated-mind-hero]	bodhisattva
sangha	*dGe-aDun* [virtue/merit-assembly]	the community
triratna	*dKon-mCHog-gSum* [rare-perfect-three] (*dKon* is the common word for [scarce] i.e. not to be found in the market; *mCHog* is [perfect/excellent] as applied to a horse)	The Jewel Triad
samadhi	*Ting-NGe-aDZin* [afterglow-real-seize] (*Ting* names that luminous moment between day and night when light and quiescence merge into peace)	state of meditation
bhavana	*sGom* [hibernate/hibernation] (shared with marmots, bears and bats)	deep meditation
karma	*Las* [work]	karma

Las, alone or in combination, is the commonly used word for work of any kind; here, it is a core concept, completely ambiguous as to noun,

verb, number, and tense and subsuming the whole of activity throughout all the rebirths in the numberless cycles of existence. It is closest to a definition of *karma*, moreover, when it is compounded with [cause-effect] i.e. *Las-rGyu-aBras* [work-cause-effect]: the sublimated concept at a transcendental level of final [justice] to which even the Buddhahood is subject.

The White-Black Ones: The Sherpa View of Human Nature

SHERRY B. ORTNER

I. It is often easier to say what something is *not* or what it is *like* than to say what it is. The Sherpas, like all people, build descriptions of phenomena by contrasts against and analogies with other phenomena. These modes of formulating ideas are especially vivid in their discussions of human nature; one can hardly touch upon the subject without bringing in gods, ghosts, witches, animals, and an assortment of other beings, whose sharply drawn idiosyncracies of form and temperament are used to highlight this or that facet of human complexity. This imagery then must be as important an element in any attempt to communicate the Sherpa view of human nature as it is for the Sherpas in their own thinking.

I have in mind here something other than the usual analysis of a culture's "projective system" to gain insight into the psyche of that culture, its forbidden desires and fears. Freud invented the psychological notion of projection, and for him, in keeping with the pervasive bias of his work, its function is largely noncreative: it is a defense mechanism. The individual involuntarily, almost automatically, projects disturbing or destructive feelings onto others in order to free the self from inner corrosion. The anthropological adaptation of this point is that cultures provide their members with standardized objects of hatred, fear, or desire ("enemies," "witches," "goddesses," and so forth) in order to channel these feelings out of the social group and undercut their potential for disrupting its functioning. Projection then in these formulations has an essentially preventive, or stop-gap function — discharging negative energies of the individual or the group (Spiro 1958; Kluckhohn 1967).

But there are certain trends in modern anthropology, articulated most forcefully in the works of Geertz (1966, 1972) which would see a more creative function (although not necessarily denying the defensive function) in the projective imagery of a culture. Such imagery is seen as

providing symbolic models of problematic and/or complex situations in the life of that culture, models from which the members of the culture may "read off," generation after generation, for as long as those texts are active and felt to be relevant, a variety of meaningful orientations for life in that culture. While such a model (say, a systematized pantheon) is symbolically rich and as such often ambiguous, the fact that it is not transferable (even given language translation) to another culture, and that within a culture it may become obsolete, indicates that there is a limit to the meanings which can be read from it.

This notion, that the symbolic constructs of a culture operate as resources for formulating thought, speech, and action in ongoing life in that culture, is much closer to the way the people themselves treat this material. In particular, the Sherpas constantly draw connections between humans and nonhuman beings, indicating clearly that those nonhuman beings are functioning for them as transformations and perspectives upon humanness itself. Several different types of connection or relationship are postulated. For one thing, it is explicitly possible for one to become in future lives many of the other beings, by cultivating or allowing to become exaggerated certain aspects of one's given humanness. Further, people can be, and often are, considered to be invested with the *principle* which vivifies some of the beings; for example, bad people may be said to have elements of demons within them. And third, some of these beings may incarnate in humans, as gods incarnate in some high lamas, or as certain demons are said to have incarnated in the modern Communist Chinese. All of these are *substantive* connections made by the culture between nonhumans and human beings — that we once were or could become members of their species, or that they might inhabit our human corporealities.

Even more important and general, however, are connections by analogy rather than by substance. Analogy is the most explicit process of using one thing to gain perspective on something else. Max Black has articulated most clearly how this works:

> Let us try to think of a metaphor as a filter. Consider the statement, "Man is a wolf." . . . A suitable hearer will be led by the wolf-system of implications to construct a corresponding system of implications about the principal subject. But these implications will *not* be those comprised in the commonplaces *normally* implied by literal uses of "man." The new implications must be determined by the pattern of implications associated with literal uses of the word "wolf." Any human traits that can without undue strain be talked about in "wolf-language" will be rendered prominent, and any that cannot will be pushed into the background. The wolf-metaphor suppresses some details, emphasizes others – in short *organizes* our view of man (Black 1962:39–41).

Black's choice of example is apt for our purposes; an animal is used to

gain perspective on human nature, and we will see the Sherpas using animals and all the other beings in the same way.

My point then is that the *analytic* use of culturally postulated non-human beings to provide perspective on that culture's view of human nature is based upon — indeed simply recapitulates — the culture's *own way* (or one of its ways) of gaining that perspective, since the culture itself draws relations of substance and analogy between the two types of beings. Thus, the procedures followed in building each point in the ensuing discussion will be similar to those a Sherpa speaker or thinker might employ to arrive at that same point.

The core of those procedures, briefly, involves creating a sort of field of relevant properties, and then *locating* the phenomenon under consideration – in this case, humankind – within that field. Such a field of properties is built up, through the use of imagery, of figures or beings that possess the properties in question to the most exaggerated degree or in the purest form, and that thus define the limits of the field. For example, to prefigure the discussion, a relevant property of human beings from the Sherpa point of view is their capacity for and degree of satiation or frustration with respect to physical needs and sensuous desires. The limits of this particular scale are defined by the gods who manifest complete satisfaction, and the demons and ghosts who manifest utter insatiability. Mankind in general is located quite a bit closer to the demons than the gods on this scale of properties, and when we know more about the nature of gods and demons in Sherpa culture, our understanding of the general Sherpa notion that people are hungry and greedy will have some of the sharpness of detail and weight of substantiality which it has for the Sherpas themselves.

The notion of such a field of properties, moreover, has a genuine dynamic built into it, since it is possible for individuals to move one way or another on any particular continuum in the field, by exaggerating one property or another of their nature. Thus while *categories* of beings (e.g., humans in general, or women, or monks) are defined by their location within the field relative to other categories, from the actor's point of view the limits of the field are a set of possibilities realizable through action over time. All of this will, I think, become clearer in the discussion itself: let us then get on with it.[1]

II. The Sherpas are an ethnic Tibetan group living in northeast Nepal. Their economic base is a mixture of agriculture and dairying, sup-

[1] The fieldwork on which this paper is based was carried out between September 1966 and February 1968 with the support of the National Institute of Mental Health and the National Science Foundation. All religious beliefs and interpretations described in this paper are derived from this fieldwork; they represent local Sherpa understandings rather than (Tibetan) Buddhist orthodoxy.

plemented by some petty trading and cash labor. As a group they are economically comfortable, although there are broad differences of wealth within the group. They practice Tibetan Buddhism of the Nying-mapa or unreformed sect. More specifically they are oriented toward the Sang-ngak subsect, which concentrates on fierce rites of destroying and exorcising demons.

Let us turn now to the cultural imagery that helps Sherpas formulate their views of human nature. The gods, first, define the upper limits of every variable or property on the field. There are several different types of gods in Sherpa culture, although all would be casually referred to by the same term (*hla*) unless the situation demanded greater specificity. There are first of all the highest gods of Tibetan Buddhism, who exist on a very abstract plane as what we might call heroes of the system. It is not possible for people to "become" these gods in any future existence; they are separate from and stand above all the processes of cosmic change. These and many other gods, however, make contact with the phenomenal world in two ways: they may reincarnate in human bodies, as bodhisattvas or *tulku*, in order to help man achieve salvation; and they preside over heavens into which an individual might, if he has perfected himself enough, be reborn. Then there are local gods, historically pre-Buddhist, that have been given a place in the pantheon beneath the Buddhist heroes. The highest of these in the Sherpa system are the two mountain gods which preside over the two Sherpa valleys. Other local gods, who are less remote and play more of an active role in human affairs, shade into what we would call spirits. All of these types of gods and spirits are worshiped in religious ritual, although the higher the god the less he is expected to do anything in return for such worship. And all are separate from the process of rebirth in which people are involved, either because, like the higher gods, they transcend it, or because, like the local gods, they are simply independent of the system that made it up in the first place.

But it is also possible for people, who are within this process, to "become gods," that is, to be reborn into a heaven. Here a slight digression to explain some Buddhist fundamentals is necessary. Buddhism postulates a Wheel of Life with which every Sherpa is familiar. The wheel is divided into six realms, into any of which it is possible to be reborn, depending on the amount of sin and merit accumulated in a lifetime. The realms are ranked from highest to lowest as follows: the heavens or fields of the gods; the realm of the *hlamayin* (usually translated as titans); the realm or state of humans; the state of (domestic) animals; the realm of the *yitak* or hungry beings; and the hells. The first three comprise the upper half of the wheel and are considered relatively good fates; the last three comprise the lower half and are considered quite miserable fates.

No state of being within the wheel is permanent. One inhabits any

realm by virtue of one's store of merit or demerit, which ticks away, as it were, over time. Even the heavenly state of godhood within the wheel is finite, and a god will eventually drop, when his store of merit runs out, to a lower order of being. Thus Buddhism postulates an even higher salvation goal than these heavens, the state of Nirvana, defined as getting off the merry-go-round altogether. The orthodox conception of Nirvana is a state of void or nothingness, but virtually no Sherpa is aware of this. Insofar as they realize that there is any goal beyond the heavens of the wheel, it would simply be some heaven *beyond* the wheel having exactly the same sorts of paradisical qualities, but from which one need never come back.

There are then Gods and gods, as it were, but ultimately the distinctions are academic, and I will use the term loosely. All gods have certain attributes that define the upper (that is, most positive) limits of the field of attributes available to, and found in varying degrees in, all human beings. These attributes, whch are very intricately intertwined, include: (1) blissful fulfillment; (2) calmness and peace; (3) perfect spirituality; (4) purity; and (5) moral perfection. The lower limits of the field, then, are defined by the extreme opposite of each of these attributes, as embodied in one or another of the nongod beings of the Sherpa world: (1) insatiable hunger and greed; (2) restlessness and violence; (3) gross physicality; (4) pollution; and (5) absolute evil. Somewhere between those upper and lower limits, as one might have guessed, fall human beings.

1. *Blissful Fulfillment/Insatiable Hunger and Greed*

The gods are perfectly fulfilled, satisfied, self-sufficient. They have no needs or desires. It is this aspect of godhood to which every other attribute has reference, and in relation to which every other attribute is defined. The fulfillment of the gods is represented in Sherpa theology in two ways that at first seem mutually contradictory, but in fact represent simple transpositions on the same point. In one variant, usually in myths of the golden age, the gods have no needs or desires at all — they need no food nor light nor warmth because they generate all the necessities of their beings from within themselves. In the other variants, which describe the godly bliss of the heavens to which man aspires to be reborn, the gods lead lives of complete sensuous gratification. All of their needs and desires are endlessly and wonderfully fulfilled. The heavens of the gods are sensuous paradises, with fine clothes and palaces, soft rugs, and sweet smells, and especially — and this is always stressed — limitless exquisite food. (Sex, it might be noted, is never mentioned as part of these paradises, although many gods are depicted in paintings in sexual embraces with goddesses, and no doubt at least some individuals' visions of

paradise would include sexual pleasures as well.) But, as pointed out by Paul (1970), whether the gods have no needs at all or endless sensuous pleasures, the point is the same: gods are utterly satisfied, unfrustrated, fulfilled in every respect.

It is this fulfillment which defines the infinite desirability of godly existence; *because* the gods are fulfilled, they experience or exist in a state of *kirmu* [bliss or perfect happiness]. *Kirmu* as a concept subsumes both the notion of freedom from needs and the notion of sensuous satisfaction and pleasure. The nearest approximation to be seen on earth is the life of the wealthy, and the same term may be used to describe their existences. But in the final analysis it is understood (although not always remembered) that these are only intimations of the unimaginable bliss of heaven.

Every other being in the world, according to the Sherpas, lacks this fulfillment, and is consequently fundamentally miserable. Indeed most are at or near the opposite extreme — hungry, frustrated, dissatisfied, eternally desiring objects of fulfillment. The attribute of utter insatiability is portrayed in not one but at least seven different beings of the Sherpa world — three kinds of demons, two different states on the Wheel of Life, and the envious witches and hungry ghosts that infiltrate the villages and cause illnesses in the people. All of these beings focus on food as the archetypal object of fulfillment, an eternally desirable thing in itself and a symbol of all the other pleasures of worldly life.

Of the demons, there are first of all *simbu*, vicious cannibalistic beings with long canines who in former times stalked the world, eating humans. They were subjugated and confined to a realm "somewhere in India" by the founder of Tibetan Buddhism and the central hero-god of the Sherpas' Nyingmapa sect, the Guru Rimpoche, although some of them, it is believed, are still at large.

Then there are *dü*, also cannibalistic, with long sharp teeth. There are many tales about *dü* in the culture; one popular one tells of the *dü* mother and her 500 sons who went about eating people. One day a great lama kidnapped one of her sons. The *dü* mother was very upset upon discovering her loss, at which point the lama appeared and said, "If you are so upset over losing one of 500 sons, imagine how all the mothers must feel, whose sons your sons have eaten." So the *dü* mother promised that she and her sons would stop eating people, and would atone for all their sins. (Her atonement represents one of the precedents for Nyungne, the Sherpa holiday of atonement.) But countless *dü* continue to prowl the world today, seeking food of flesh and blood, and hence several times a year there must be ceremonies to slake their desires and keep them from feeding upon people.

The third type of insatiable demon with great vividness in Sherpa thought are the *de*, who according to some villagers are actually a special

kind of *dü*. They too are voracious beings whose chief focus of existence is eating things; in terms of sheer greed they are probably the worst of the lot. *De* show up at every feast; they come in to wedding feasts with the people carrying the dowry; they have a special appetite for religious offerings and come to every service; they flock to funerals for the food of the feasts, and especially for the corpse, the ultimate delicacy of their diet. In every case, they must be got rid of by feeding their bloody appetites with substitute offerings, although at funerals they are given their fill of the corpse, since conveniently enough it is something people need to get rid of anyway.[2]

The second set of images of exaggerated greed, frustration, and insatiability in the Sherpa world are two categories of beings on the wheel of life, the *yitak* and the *hlamayin*. Neither of these types have any direct contact with the human realm, but both are possible future incarnations for any human who exhibits a high degree of their special characteristics in the course of this human life. The *hlamayin*, first, are ranked below the gods but higher than humans on the Wheel of Life, although the Sherpas consider this rather puzzling, since their lives are at least as unpleasant and corrupt as our own. The *hlamayin* spend all their time fighting with the gods over food; everyone knows their fate, which is recounted as follows:

> The *hlamayin* live under a fine fruit tree, but the upper branches of the tree reach into the realm of the gods. The gods thus eat all the fruit (presumably one of the perquisites of being a god). The *hlamayin* try to reach the heavenly realm. Meanwhile, their guns misfire, temporarily killing them. As they fall back down, other *hlamayin* take their places, and so it goes in an endless cycle.

The *hlamayin* are never permanently killed in these skirmishes, because a god has given them an elixir which causes their wounds to heal quickly. Thus they spend all their time enslaved by their insatiable greed, tied to a painful and fruitless quest.

One step up from hell on the Wheel of Life are the *yitak*, probably the purest images of frustration and insatiability of the whole lot. As any man, woman, or child could tell you, and as you can see on any Wheel of Life paintings, *yitak* are creatures with enormous mouths and enormous stomachs and tiny, thin necks. They are possessed of tremendous hunger

[2] The feeding of the corpse to the demons is specifically related to the famous *chod tongup* ceremony of the Tibetan shaman/lamas of olden times. These lamas went to isolated places, preferably funeral locations, and meditated for long periods of time, offering their bodies to the gods and demons. Many voracious beings would come and dismember and devour them; but then, such was the great power of the lamas, the demons would replace everything perfectly, and the lamas would be totally restored. If their powers were not great enough, however, they would die. The notion of corporeal dismemberment and ultimate restoration to wholeness is discussed by Eliade (1964). The *chod tongup* ceremony is described in detail in Alexandra David-Neel's *Magic and mystery in Tibet* (1958).

and burning thirst, and they cannot ever swallow enough food to satisfy themselves. People who are greedy for food become *yitak* in their next lives, and *yitak* are tormented by exaggerated insatiable hunger. This simple image is constantly drawn upon by Sherpas in discussing the hungry, frustrated aspects of human nature; the image of the *yitak* is felt to shed very powerful light upon this point.

A final set of images of insatiability brings the whole thing very close to home, since they are generated from real human beings, actual individuals with whom one is or has been acquainted. They are, in anthropological parlance, ghosts (*nerpa*) and witches (*pem*).

Nerpa, first, are ghosts of deceased persons that for one reason or another have not achieved a definitive reincarnation, although it is thought that eventually they will. They are homeless, bodyless souls, often people one actually knew, who range through the human realm perpetually wretched and miserable, causing illness wherever they happen to strike. When they speak through a shaman's mouth, they always complain of being hungry and thirsty, and they beg food and drink as their ransom for the patient's health. *Nerpa* are the single biggest cause of illness in Sherpa life. They strike victims at random and there is generally no significant connection (except that they tend to be the souls of former covillagers) between the victim and the *nerpa* that would explain why the *nerpa* chose to strike where it did. *Nerpa* may cause almost any illness, and are totally immune to Western medicine. The only way of combating them is through curing rituals which, once again, involve offering them food and drink and hoping temporarily to satisfy their needs and wants.

Closely related to *nerpa* (so close that the two are often hyphenated into a single term, *pem-nerpa*, is the envious witch or *pem*. *Pem* is, by careful definition, not actually a being or person, but a force that resides in people, especially in women. However, a woman (usually an old widow) whose *pem* becomes regularly active may be called (though not to her face) a *pem*; and further, it is possible, though rare, for *pem* to become active in a man. The *pem* of a man tends to cause fatal illness, while the *pem* of a woman tends to cause nonfatal, although potentially serious, ailments, usually centering on digestive disorders. *Pem* are aroused to violence by the sight of others enjoying good food and fine things, and not sharing any with them. They strike those people with illness either directly, or through spoiling their food; in their lowest grade piques they may simply curdle the household's supply of milk for the day. *Pem* are probably the mildest of the hungry and greedy beings, and the most closely analogous to humans. Indeed, the image of *pem* is scarcely an analogy at all, merely a slight reification of a (culturally perceived) human motive, since *pem* are in and part of people.

The perfect fulfillment of the gods on the one hand, and the hunger, envy, greed, and frustration of the various unpleasant beings on the other

— these provide the images of the upper and lower limits of one dimension of human nature as the Sherpas see it, a dimension defined largely in relation to food. On this dimension humans are located considerably closer to the bottom than the top. The human organism must constantly have food simply to survive, and the sensuous wanting of food, elaborated over and above the physiological need for food, is felt by the Sherpas to play an exaggerated role in people's lives and thoughts. They will often remark on this quite matter-of-factly:

> Dawiama asked if I had visited the ascetic who was meditating up the hill above the village. She expressed awe at his feat of only eating daily an amount the size of the finger-tip she held up, whereas we lay people are always hungry and eat enormous quantities of food.

On another occasion, a woman discoursed at some length on the point that Sherpas ate and drank too much, that they were always drinking tea and beer, forever stuffing down enormous gross piles of mush, and so forth.

More generally, the Sherpas will simply say outright that people are essentially greedy, always wanting food and other material and sensuous things. On the scale of greed, however, women are considered to be greedier than men, more tempted for example to prepare for themselves elaborate snacks between meals, and always subject to becoming envious witches. And at least one villager remarked, after a nun had, in begging, asked for a bit of virtually everything in the house, that although monks and nuns were taught not to need many things, not to eat much, and so forth, they seemed to come out greedier than everyone else.

But while people are considered to be essentially greedy, they are not utterly insatiable. They are capable of achieving substantial sensuous gratification, and the happy glow of pleasure that derives from it, for at least brief periods of time. Indeed it is those periods of satisfaction that give humans insight into the potential joys of godhood and heaven. Thus humanity is located between the extremes of godhood and demonhood. This intermediate state has one very close analogue in the figures of the guardian gods and spirits who inhabit the local area, coexisting in very close mutual relationships with people.

The local spirits of the Sherpa area constitute among themselves a loose hierarchy. At the top are the two mountain gods mentioned earlier. Then there are the temple guardians, and more or less on a par with them the spirits, called *lu*, that guard the purity of the hearths of the households and the villages in general. And finally there are a variety of lake, pasture, and lower status mountain spirits, as well as the spirits of the more local subareas of the Sherpa realm. While the higher status beings on this hierarchy would be called types of "gods," and lower ones would be called by a term which we might loosely gloss as spirits, all of them share

the characteristic of being closely concerned with people and their affairs; and it is they, treated as "emanations" and/or "helpers" of the high gods, to whom the Sherpas turn for aid and protection in carrying on the enterprises of wordly existence. And while they are collectively higher than people on the scale of being, they share most directly many of our characteristics.

On the particular issue of relative fulfillment vs. insatiability, these spirits, like people, are neither wholly blissfully fulfilled, nor eternally frustrated and voracious. They are somewhat more fulfilled than people, and hence somewhat more regularly benign or happy, but they require regular periodic feeding in order to sustain their good moods; otherwise they become angry and visit retribution on the people and their natural resources, either directly through illness and blight, or indirectly by withdrawing their protection and leaving people prey to the demons.

The spirits, then, like people, contrast with the demons in their lesser degree of greed and ill-humor, and in their capacity for achieving periods of fulfillment. While demons are always greedy and foul-tempered, people and spirits only need food periodically, and only become unhappy when it is not forthcoming. And while demons, after being fed, merely withdraw in a surly way only to come back as soon as possible, both humans and spirits can be actively made happy by food for some length of time.

2. *Calmness and Peace/Restlessness and Violence*

The fulfillment of the gods renders them calm, peaceful, and self-contained. The frustration of the miserable beings renders them angry, restless, violent, aggressive. These are considered to be direct causal connections: peace and absence of passions derive from satisfaction, anger and violence derive from deprivation, especially with respect to food, both in itself and as a symbol of all other material and sensuous gratifications.

All three types of demons already encountered are by definition violent and aggressive toward human beings; that is their essential nature. The demons are voracious for human flesh and blood, and they will take it wherever they can get it. However, they are rarely seen as directly aggressing against living people; they are primarily depicted in tales and myths of the violence and anarchy which prevailed before people were given the true religion (and, implicitly, as would prevail if people cease to practice the true religion). The closest models of such generalized anarchic violence available to Sherpa awareness in modern times are the Communist Chinese, who are known to kill people in Tibet, especially monks, and who are considered to be incarnate *simbu*. Another close

model is provided by the occasional wild animal that attacks a human being unprovoked; in several local stories of such attacks, the animal turns out to be a demon in disguise. The *yeti* or abominable snowmen have this quality of being something between a wild animal and a demon. The Sherpa tendency to view wild animals as demons rather than as animals seems clearly to rest on their aggressiveness, contrasting with the docility and passiveness of domestic beasts.

Hlamayin, pem, and *nerpa* were all seen to be violent in frustration over ordinary food, rather than, like demons, over flesh and blood. The *hlamayin* continually launch attacks upon the gods over fruit, and themselves get hurt in the process. *Pem* and *nerpa* ubiquitously and capriciously cause illness out of need, greed, and envy for others' food. Their violence is constantly felt in the villages; almost all cases of illness are attributed to their activities.

On this particular scale of qualities then, from peaceful nonviolence to wrathful aggression, humanity is once again located nearer the demons than the gods. Latent violence is assumed to exist in all human beings, and lamentably flares up from time to time in genuine physical aggression. But if people are far from the peace of godhood, it is important that our violence is not random and capricious, but is focused and generated by specific grievances. Random violence in humans is primarily seen under the influence of alcohol, and it is probably in part for this reason that alcohol, though widely consumed, is considered so heavily sinful.

Humanity's closest analogues, on the issue of peace or violence, are once again the local guardian gods and spirits. Spirits, like humans, are touchy, capable of being stirred to anger and aggression. But this violence is only awakened in response to specific slights — neglect of their offerings or violation of the environment which they protect — rather than being random and capricious. Conversely, spirits, like humans, are capable of being satisfied, and as such being rendered peaceful and nonviolent — with proper care and feeding.

More importantly, the analogy between spirits and humans brings out a factor not directly visible in the simple polar contrasts against the gods and demons on this point. For while both people and spirits become angry and violent in the face of frustration, they also both become actively benevolent, helpful, and cooperative toward others when they are made happy with food and drink. The spirits, kept properly satisfied and propitiated, can be counted on, as the Sherpas say in a term that has heavy import in the culture, to *help* people; that is, to oversee our general welfare, smile upon our endeavors, and protect us from invidious forces. They can be enlisted to aid in our ongoing battle with the demons, and they visit retribution on ignorant or evil people who violate our homes, temples, and environment. Similarly, if one's fellow humans are kept happy and fulfilled with food and drink, not only is their latent anger

forestalled, but they can then be expected to cooperate with us on whatever (within reason) we might ask of them, or to be generally benevolent and available for aid and cooperation in the future.

All of this contrasts strongly with both the gods and the demons. The gods in their perfect fullfillment are totally self-contained; sunk in their bliss, immobile, they do not do anything but enjoy their state. This image, when contrasted with the image of the demons constantly and restlessly preying on others, has the implication of nonviolence. But while the gods do not do anything *to* others, neither do they do anything *for* others; there are no social relations in heaven. The demons on the other hand will do only harm, and pacifying them with food only keeps them at bay, rather than gaining any positive benefits from them. Only the spirits manifest the third variant of the aggression/nonaggression scale, the possibility of active aid, benevolence, and cooperation in response to the pleasures of sensuous fulfillment.

Human nature, then, goes off on a sort of tangent from this particular scale. We have much latent violence in ourselves and hence are rather like the demons, although our violence, unlike theirs which is random and capricious, tends ideally to be focused and retributive, which is to say comprehensible and manageable. But when we are fulfilled and happy, our satisfaction renders us not only passively nonviolent; it ideally does not take the form of asocial self-contained bliss, as does that of the gods. Rather it becomes transmuted into fellow-feeling for others, especially for the agencies of our satisfaction, and we become willing to help and support their endeavors. Thus we are again much like the spirits, who when fulfilled and made happy by us, put themselves at our disposal in return.

3. *Perfect Spirituality/Gross Physicality*

The gods are perfectly spiritual, that is, totally noncorporeal. This is considered to be, in large part, fundamental to their state of blissful fulfillment and peaceful self-containment, since according to orthodox Buddhism it is the body which is the primary agency of our troubles. The twelve-step chain of causation articulated by the Buddha, pictured in twelve images around the perimeter of the Wheel of Life, explains that the agency of all our suffering is the operation of the senses. The senses lead us into sins, since our desires for sensuous gratification may cause us to harm and kill others in order to get what they have; specifically, sexual desires lead us into procreating more humans, with attendant sufferings of birth, poverty, illness, and death, and the potential for committing more sins.

Orthodox textual Buddhism stresses the sufferings of the mortal body

— sensitivity to pain, inevitable decay — and the sinfulness of mortal existence, and tends to downplay the issue of pollution, no doubt in reaction to the elaborate pollution consciousness of the Hinduism to which it was, historically, reacting. But pollution concern (about which more below) thrives among the Sherpas; and the fact that the physiological processes of the body are a major source of polluting things (the bodily excretions and exuvia) and that the senses lead us into polluting activities (primarily sex and eating, which generate more excretions) are other major negative aspects of the body.

The image of purest physicality and of its negative consequences is furnished by domestic animals. Animals do have some mind or spirit, as opposed to inert matter, and therefore must not be killed, but this spirit is tiny compared to the gross physiological aspects of being an animal. And because the ratio of body to spirit is so grossly out of proportion, the operation of spirit is impeded or stunted. Animals are stupid, insensitive, incapable of perfecting themselves. They are unable to comprehend the distinctions important to either a satisfactory worldly existence or the quest for salvation. Insensitive to shame, they copulate and excrete in public, eat food wherever they find it, and so forth. Insensitive to pollution, they eat slops and leftovers and give full expression to all their bodily processes. Cows have no function other than as organic machines; oxen and yaks, when not laboring, do nothing but operate their bodies. And finally, unable to comprehend sin and virtue because of their stupidity, domestic animals sin constantly by killing thousands of tiny creatures as they blunder about, and are unable to think or focus on any higher goals of salvation. All of these lamentable facts about animals derive directly from their disproportionately high ratio of body to mind.

Because people have a well-developed mind or spirit, we are in part like the gods; because we have bodies, we are in part like the animals. We are in fact unique among the beings of the world in our thoroughly balanced dualistic nature, and have no close analogues among other beings which model this tense duality. But the picture is somewhat more complicated than simply mixing gods and animals to make humans.

For one thing, though orthodox Buddhism sees the body as the agency of all feeling — all (illusory) gratifications and all frustrations — the broader Buddhism subscribed to by the Sherpas contains certain contradictions with respect to the body. The gods have no bodies, yet, in the heavens, experience sensuous pleasures. And the spirits and demons have no bodies, yet experience sensuous frustration and all the violence and aggression that it generates. Thus the good state of the gods and the miserable state of the demons operate somewhat independently of the issue of presence or absence of body.

The notion that the bliss of the gods is sensuous is perhaps an understandable corruption of orthodoxy, since humans have few images for

bliss apart from the pleasures of the flesh. I imagine that a sophisticated lama might make this point: that the sensual images of godly bliss are *merely* images or metaphors, because people have no other way to conceive of such bliss.

The lower beings that are bodiless and yet frustrated and aggressive are more problematic. To some extent the problem might be handled by pointing out that most of these lower beings, while insubstantial, have close and recurrent connections with bodies—*pem* live in human bodies; *nerpa* derive directly from deceased human beings; *lu* spirits, which we will meet in the purity discussion, have partly animal (snake) form, are said to have herds of (real) snakes and invisible animals, and are indicated in dreams by figures of animals; demons often take human bodily form to do their evil work, and in any case are defined by a hunger for flesh and blood. Thus, the contradiction of frustration in the demons despite their bodilessness can be handled by a certain amount of sophistry, which demonstrates their close connections with bodies; such sophistry, moreover, would not be at all foreign to Sherpa thought.

But in addition to these internal, logical contradictions there is the contradiction of actual experience against the ideology of the system. Buddhism may tell the Sherpas that the body is a vile thing, but every Sherpa knows that it is also a great source of pleasure. And while it clearly generates trouble — sin and pollution, not to mention children who must be supported by hard labor — this does not for most people negate the genuinely good feelings derived from the operation of the senses. The body may be bad, but it is also clearly good. This contradiction is unresolved for the Sherpas; it weighs heavily (if intermittently) on those who do not choose its only thoroughgoing resolution, the ascetic course.

In what was perhaps an attempt to soften this contradiction between religious ideology and lay experience, a sophisticated Sherpa lama argued that man's having body as well as mind has a positive *religious* (as well as a positive sensuous) import; his point was that body directed by mind can perform virtuous *action* toward salvation. By implication, then, man is in a better position even than the gods (that is, those in the heavens of the Wheel of Life), since the gods have no bodies with which to perform such action, and indeed given the perfectness of the heavens they have no opportunity for moral choice at all. The lama's argument also implies that the body serves a valuable function as a foil in the quest for salvation, since virtue can be practiced in acts of transcending the body. Humanity's unique combination of mind and body, from this point of view, is the best of all possible states of being, for with our greater possibilities of moral choice, of real bodily enacted moral action, and with the bodily foil to play off against, we can perhaps escape from the round of rebirth altogether into an eternal heavenly existence.

In sum, humanity's nature with respect to the spiritual-physical opposi-

tion is complex. We fall squarely between the gods as images of pure spirituality on the one hand, and animals as the images of almost pure physicality on the other (the only things more physical are the floral and mineral environment, but having no mind at all these do not provide analogues for humanity). But our unique balance of the two dimensions gives us certain emergent special properties that have no analogues elsewhere, and that are the sources of our unique problems and potentials.

4. *Purity/Pollution*

Sherpa notions of purity and pollution are elaborate and complex. An analysis of the full range of their beliefs, myths, and practices surrounding these notions indicates that for them pollution has an essential double aspect, building upon two of the properties already discussed: physicality in all its aspects, and violence in all its aspects (Ortner 1973). Perfect purity — the transcendance of both physicality and violence — is of course manifested only by the gods. The gods lack physical bodies and physiological processes, and exist in a state of peaceful nonviolence; hence they are by definition perfectly pure. Animals, mired in their physiological processes, embody the physical side of pollution, while demons, who are by nature angry and aggressive, model the violent side of pollution.

There is some question as to whether violence is really a separate aspect. The Sherpas themselves see aggression as a result of frustration of the needs of the body and the desires of the senses, that is, as a derivative of physicality. And the various violent and aggressive phenomena considered polluting by them could be reduced to associations with things deriving from the physical. Thus, fighting is polluting, but perhaps that is because of the close bodily contact (crowds are polluting too) and the contact with any blood that is shed, rather than the violence per se. Similarly, demons are filthy and contact with them is polluting, but demons all have close associations with disgusting physical things: all eat flesh and blood, some witches do their evil work with hair and nail cuttings, *dü* demons cling to and eat corpses, *simbu* demons left the world a legacy of unpleasant things as by-products of their bodies — garlic is said to have first grown where they defecated, land leeches originated from their entrails. Thus it could be argued that the pollution of demons, as of fighting, derives from their physical associations rather than their violence. Yet there are strong indications that violence has a separate genesis from physicality in Sherpa thought (and the point remains that demons are violent even though they have no bodies); it emerges as an independent dimension of their concept of pollution (Ortner 1973).

In any case, humanity once again is located in the middle of this field, between the gods on the one hand and the animals and demons on the other. Indeed, myth has it that humans once were "like the gods," bodiless and pure, but then, according to the myth, they made a double mistake: they killed animals (engaged in violence) and they ate their meat and other "dirty foods" (indulged in desires for flesh and filth). As a result of this original pollution, as it were, they "turned into flesh and blood, and began to urinate and defecate." In short, violence and contact with physical things engendered the body, and the body continues to engender violence and physical things. Indeed the body *is* the archetypal physical thing, which in life permanently envelops our spirit, constantly threatening to suffocate it.

We are then, as corporeal and temperamental beings, permanently polluted relative to the gods; although, as long as our spiritual element remains strong, clear, and purposive, we have not fallen to the state of the animals or demons. On the scale of purity and pollution, as on the other scales of traits, the status of humans is once again intermediate between extremes. But more important than simply the fact of that intermediateness, is the great precariousness of our status: we are always subject to further pollution, threatening to reduce us to less-than-human states and conditions. Such states may involve physical deformities and/or especially mental incapacities that make it difficult if not impossible either to get along adequately in the world or to seek salvation or a better birth the next time around. Temporary pollution in a normal human being renders one either dull and lethargic or agitated and confused; more serious pollution may lead to being reborn as, or if one had been normal at birth, to grow up as, a cretin, or to have physical deformities; both cretinism and deformities bar one from becoming a monk — the most direct road to salvation — and impede in varying degrees one's social functioning in the world.

As beings with great susceptibility and sensitivity to pollution, our closest analogues are, once again, the local guardian gods and spirits. While all of these spirits are incorporeal and do not share our problem of being saddled with that great pollution machine, the body, nonetheless in their assigned stations as guardians of human-occupied and utilized places they are saddled with *us* and the impurities which we generate. Our environment is in a sense their body, or at least their home or housing, and they become angered when we, with our unfortunate habits, pollute it.

The local spirits, it will be recalled, include the mountain gods who are concerned with the general welfare of the whole area, but who also specifically react to pollution of their heights by the presence of climbers. There are also the temple guardians who watch over the purity of the temples, and become angry if, for example, women enter the inner

sanctums or if inappropriate activities take place in the temples. (For example, when a government representative attempted to show a film in the village temple and his projector failed to work, it was gleefully assumed by the villagers to have been the work of the temple guardian.) When offended by pollution, the retribution of the local spirits often falls not only on the particular offender, but on the entire village or even on a larger area, bringing illness to people and perhaps plagues to the animals or crops.

The most important and well-delineated of such spirits concerned with purity are the *lu*, the Sherpa version of the *naga* spirits common to most of South and Southeast Asia. *Lu* are guardians of the purity of the soil and the streams, and of the houses and their hearths. House and hearth *lu* are primarily offended by foul odors, especially those caused by burning animal matter — meat, milk, hair, nails, bloody cloths, and so on — in the household fire. *Lu* of the outer environment are offended by pollution of that environment — chopping trees in certain areas, and especially dirtying streams and water points with human wastes. Some streams are guarded by particularly touchy *lu*, who will not even tolerate washing one's body or one's clothes in them. Any *lu* who is polluted through a person's agency becomes angry and strikes the offender with illness. *Lu* cause ailments that almost always involved unpleasant visible corruptions of the body — sores and boils, leprosy, physical deformities, swellings, and so forth. They may also cause blindness and insanity. Angry *lu* must be pacified with pure offerings — butter and other dairy products, white flags, and incense — accompanied by verbal apologies improvised by the supplicant.

Lu's analogy with human beings on the issue of purity and pollution is quite close, in stressing the striving for purity but the great susceptibility to pollution. The analogy is further developed in details known by any Sherpa about aspects of *lu*'s nature. For one thing, the category of *lu* comprises, although in a somewhat confused way, male and female gender. It is my impression that most people assumed them to be male in offhand discourse, but when questioned specify that *lu* are female, and that they have husbands, male *lu* called *sabtak*, with whom they live. Secondly, they may be, depending on their mood, or in some cases by nature, either black or white, or a mixture (envisioned as spotted) of black and white; and in certain proverbs the metaphor for humans that stresses their in-between, pulled-both-ways nature is "the white-black ones." Third, there is the conception of *lu*'s forms as represented in paintings — half anthropomorphic, half snake — pointing to the analogy with humanity's partly animal nature. All of these points show *lu* as embodying both aspects of the purity and pollution opposition: while they guard purity and demand pure offerings, they also embody femaleness, blackness, and animalness, which are essentially correlates of the

impure. That they have associations with both soil (relatively impure) and water (pure), and that our local *lu* at least liked its milk from cows colored both red (a colour of impurity) and white (the color of purity), makes the same point. Like people, *lu* strive for purity, but like people they are vulnerable to pollution and embody it within their own beings along with their own natural purity.

5. *Moral Perfection/Absolute Evil*

While it is assumed that the gods are morally perfect, absolutely good, there is nothing about their image that depicts this point with great force. Indeed the gods within the Wheel of Life, for those who are aware of this point of doctrine, are not perfect since each has a latent store of demerit that will assert itself when his merit runs out. More important, however, is the point that, since the heavens contain no evil, scarcity, physicality, or deprivation, there is no opportunity for the gods to display moral goodness, to exercise moral choice; morality or virtue is visible only in operation, in negating evil.

The more direct source of such imagery then is not the vision of the gods immobile and blissful in their heavens, but the gods fighting the demons, especially in myths of the triumph of Buddhism over the primordial demons and forces of darkness. The demons are indeed images of absolute evil — filthy, violent, and randomly aggressive against humanity. All of the demons discussed earlier participate in a myth or ritual in which a great god or lama battles with and triumphs over them, at least temporarily. *Simbu* were subjugated by the Guru Rimpoche and confined to a special place surrounded by steep mountains and an impassable road. *Dü* have been battled by many great personages; we saw how a lama tricked a *dü* mother into giving up her evil ways. In another tale, there was a *dü* living in a cave in a rock, near the site of a famous local miracle. The Guru Rimpoche tried to get into the cave to destroy the *dü*, but the cave was sealed except for a hole in the roof, through which steam could be seen emerging, indicating the location of the demon. The Guru Rimpoche, undaunted by the sealed cave, flew to the top, found the hole, and urinated down onto the *dü*, reducing him to a smoldering, steaming mass. And here is perhaps the original myth of the gods' battle with *dü*.

> Once upon a time there were many *dü* troubling the world. They were killing everyone, and causing the water and trees to dry up. Then the god Zhembiyang came to the rescue. He flew through the sky to Kanchenjunga mountain and there, from the highest peak, he impregnated a woman with a ray from his third eye. The baby was born with three heads, and the mother was frightened at the sight of it and ran away. But the baby reassured her — he was really the great triple

god constellation Risangombo, born with three heads to frighten the *dü*. Risangombo went on to rid the world of most of the *dü*, and to bring the remainder under at least limited control.

Despite all the skirmishes of gods and lamas against *dü*, and as the end of the myth indicates, many *dü* are still at large, and important religious ceremonies must be regularly held to combat them.

The demons are evil fundamentally because they are by nature aggressive and violent toward people, but with the advent of the religion that systematically undertook to protect people and help them escape the miseries of life, the evilness of demons is further defined by their attempts to subvert the religion in general. We have seen the *de* who attempt to get into the religious services, corrupt the lamas' thoughts, and eat up all the offerings; every religious service has mechanisms for combating *de*. Then there are *dirnbu*, a type of demon we meet for the first time here, defined largely in terms of their enmity with the religion. *Dirnbu* were also subjugated by the Guru Rimpoche, but again many are still around. They may take the form of forces which reside in bad humans; people who are really *dirnbu* are not aware of it, but they are full of bad thoughts. They eat much, they hate everyone, and in particular they hate lamas. *Dirnbu* may also take independent bodily forms, assuming the guise of a friend or a relative and leading people to their deaths; to a lama they may appear as a beautiful woman who urges the lama to break his vows. Even in ordinary life it is said that hostesses who urge village lamas (who are supposed to make at least some gestures toward asceticism despite being married) to eat and drink a great deal have a tiny element of *dirnbu* in them.

Thus, the evil of demons is defined in part by the particular evil things they do, and in part by the (historically superimposed) fact that they play the role of enemies of the faith, either in myths of early confrontations between them and the Buddhist heroes, or because even today they continue to try to corrupt the lamas and otherwise subvert the living religion. Correspondingly, the moral goodness of the gods is exhibited primarily by the fact that they do battle with the demons. Yet this is a problematic sort of goodness. We saw how the god Risangombo, in battling the *dü*, assumed an ugly and frightening form. Indeed, as thousands of paintings and frescoes testify, any god in his militant anti-demon phase is depicted as something that looks pretty demonic itself, a figure with long fangs, multiple heads and limbs, frightening faces, an erect sexual organ, and wielding weapons of violence. Any Sherpa will explain that the gods have to assume these forms in order to battle the demons, and that the gods can change at will back to their benign and peaceful forms when their distasteful task is done. But the argument, it seems to me, is not fully convincing. Given the Buddhist discrediting of

both sexuality and violence, it seems unlikely that beings heavily involved in these states, however temporarily and for whatever good ends, could be accepted as images of absolute goodness.

There are then certain problems with the gods as models of moral perfection. Sitting blissfully in their perfect heavens, they cannot dramatically exhibit moral goodness that depends upon active moral choice and deeds. On the other hand, although fighting demons is an exhibition of moral behavior, this debases the gods, if only temporarily and illusorily, to the level of the demons themselves.

Where then are the images of true goodness? Interestingly enough, the clearest we get are within the human realm itself. These are of several types. There are, first of all, very generous people; episodes of their generosity are remembered and told, even after they die. Some are villagers who go out of their way to give others hospitality when there is nothing in it for them. Others are lamas who refuse to accept overly lavish gifts when they know the donor cannot really afford it, and lamas who are said literally to give the clothes off their backs to unfortunate people. And there are the wealthy people who endow important religious institutions for the public welfare instead of (or at least in addition to) using their wealth for their own creature comforts. Generosity is the *social* version of moral goodness, countering evil in the world not by fighting it, but by outbalancing it with good.

The other figures which approximate moral perfection are the religious ascetics, whose goodness consists of renouncing and attempting to transcend all the evil in themselves. There is the figure of the *tolden*, an ascetic hermit (essentially a yogin) who has taken up a life of isolation and self-control, neglecting his physical person and ultimately gaining magical powers. Real Tibetan and Sherpa *tolden* no longer exist, but the original *Tolden* is said to have been a historic personage, whose powers and deeds are reenacted every year at the great monastery festival of Mani Rimdu in one of the most popular acts of the festival.[3]

Then there are the *gelung*, the first of whom was the historical Buddha; the *gelung* is a monk who has achieved an advanced stage of learning and has taken the maximum vows of religious virtue and purity. Throughout the course of his career, the *gelung* periodically goes into solitary retreat, where he meditates and practices extreme asceticism — no contact with people, minimal clothing, and only a miniscule amount of food each day. When he emerges from retreat, the *gelung* returns to the monastery and the company of his fellow monks, but continues to eat sparingly and otherwise lead a life of self-denial. *Gelung* are easily distinguished from

[3] According to Jerstad (1969), the *tolden* figure in the Mani-Rimdu festival is an object of ridicule, demonstrating the foolishness of Indian yogis who exhibit their asceticism for public show. Most of the Sherpas I spoke to were not aware of this meaning, and were impressed by the *tolden*'s feats of spiritual strength.

ordinary monks by the bright yellow cloth they wear over their red robes; boys learn early what they represent, hear tales of legendary *gelung*, and say they want to be *gelung* when they grow up.

The generous person, the religious ascetic — these in contrast to the gods are the vivid images of moral goodness in the world. The demons remain the purest images of evil, although we can also see demonic tendencies as well as goodness within actual people. Human nature in short is once again between the extremes — the white-black one, between good and evil; it has a strong tendency and ample opportunity to be evil, but it also has the greatest potential and opportunity to perfect itself and approach true good.

III. In any anthropological analysis, we ideally learn two things at once: we learn something about the other culture, and we learn something about our own ways of thinking and arriving at what we have learned, that is, about the methods of anthropological inquiry. In this paper, I have attempted to give the reader insight into the Sherpa view of human nature, with some of the fullness, richness, and vividness with which the Sherpas themselves conceive it. We have seen that there are at least five separable, though complexly interrelated, dimensions of this view: people are (1) relatively unfulfilled, frustrated, and unhappy; consequently they are (2) relatively violent by nature; (3) they are composed of spirit enveloped in body; as a result of their violence and corporeality they are (4) relatively polluted, and always susceptible to further pollution; and (5) they are morally highly imperfect, though because of their constant struggle with greater imperfection they have unique possibilities for moral self-perfection. This in a few words is the substance of the body of Sherpa thought that I have attempted to delineate.

But how did I go about "discovering" this complex of ideas? What have we learned about our own methods of investigating and comprehending another culture's conceptions? The key methodological point has been the use of cultural imagery and symbols as a source of conceptual information, much as it functions for the Sherpas themselves as such a source. The Sherpas formulate and communicate their notions of human nature primarily through contrasts against, and analogies with, a range of other beings whose existences and natures are postulated in verbal descriptions, paintings and sculptured forms, stories and myths. The beings each manifest one or another of the human traits and propensities in some exaggerated form. They are explicitly drawn upon by the Sherpas to illustrate what happens, for good or ill, when a particular trait becomes exaggerated or dominant within a single nature. While it is certainly possible for Sherpas to discuss human nature in straightforward descriptive terms, the various beings are frequently employed by them

to provide deeper and more detailed insight into the subtleties and vagaries of people, and that is how they have been employed in this analysis.

The movement of such a discussion — from gods to animals and demons, from each or all to people, from people to spirits and back — is not random. It can be represented, as I suggested earlier, as movement on a sort of map or field of properties. The parameters of the field are precisely defined by the most exaggerated extrahuman images, positive and negative, of the various properties. It then becomes possible to describe humanity — its less extreme, less clear-cut nature — by locating it within the field and understanding its place on each of the property dimensions. The discussion is thus quite controlled, since the limits of the field are well delineated, and since there is a point of reference — human nature — from which it was elaborated in the first place, and to which it must always return.

The notion of such a map or field has further utility, provided we are well aware of its pitfalls, particularly its lack of neutrality compared to an ordinary map. A road map, for example, is utterly neutral as to where one is or should be trying to go; one may choose any destination in the world, and one may further trace any route from one's present location in order to arrive there. A cultural map such as the one I have described, on the other hand, is heavily loaded in favor of one destination and against almost any of the others, as well as being strongly ambiguous about where we happen to be right now. It is not purely a cognitive tool, but incorporates a limited set of values, and these must be understood if the map is to make any sense.

The usefulness of such a cultural map is thus not only that it provides a way of locating and describing a particular point, as does an algebraic graph, or as does an atlas when we merely want to know, "for information's sake," where Canterbury of Kathmandu happen to be; but that it also provides certain *orientations* (sustaining the geographic metaphor) toward where one should or should not want to go. Thus its parameters not only provide cognitive referents, but also suggest normative goals, and from this point of view each of its property dimensions (fulfillment/insatiability, purity/pollution, and so forth) are potentially tracks or roads — "paths," as the Buddha might have called them — which it is possible for the individual to move along. People may decide personally to attempt to transcend their lot. The map both exhorts them to do so, and presents for them, in its imagery, what such transcendence would look like.

That the Sherpa map of human nature's properties is heavily loaded in favor of transcendental religious goals should not, however, blind us to the fact that it can be and is employed by individuals — in fact by most individuals most of the time — for achieving a number of ends not specifically programmed into the map. In particular, the weaknesses of oneself and of

one's fellow humans, painted so negatively on the map, are indulged for temporal pleasure, and used and played upon to achieve all sorts of worldly ends. Thus while the map is not morally neutral like a road map, it can be treated as such. And it is the contradictions generated by twisting its purposes that often animate much of Sherpa thought and behavior.[4]

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[4] A point of interest that emerges from the discussion in this paper, one which undoubtedly deserves a whole essay but about which I might make a few remarks here, centers on the problems which seem to have been created for Tibetans and their descendants by the acceptance of the Buddhist ideology. The radical salvation ideas of Buddhism, including the paradisical heavens, the devaluation of worldly existence, the notion of sin, and the demand for asceticism of the flesh, clearly added a new and difficult dimension to the religious thought of those who accepted it (the same is true, of course, for those on the other side of the world who accepted Christianity). Although the old pre-Buddhist spirits have no doubt undergone many changes since the introduction of Buddhism, we can clearly see that for the most part they are more human, more comprehensible, and essentially validate life as it is lived in the world. The Buddhist heavens put a new and virtually unreachable ceiling on human aspirations; creating, it seems to me, a great deal of guilt, contradiction, and frustration for those who simply wish to go about leading an ordinary, satisfying life on earth. Why millions of people accepted for themselves a radical salvation ideology — which is ultimately to ask for all the reasons for the phenomenal success of Buddhism and Christianity about 2,000 years ago and since — is indeed quite a mystery for the student of human nature. Only the theologian who argues that man fundamentally aspires to do something more than just hedonistically get by has really addressed this question, although theological discussions are not fully satisfactory either.

Tibetan Oracles

H.R.H. PRINCE PETER OF GREECE AND DENMARK

Oracles in Tibet are called *Chos-sKyong* or *Chos-rGyal* and sometimes also *Chos-dje,* which is a more popular form. Before the Chinese occupation of Tibet they coexisted with the Lamaist Church and were shown both popular and official esteem. They never really came into conflict with Buddhism, although high-ranking dignitaries tended to look upon them as remnants of a bygone age and the expression of popular credulity. Oracles were to be found distributed all over the country, the minor ones in villages and populous centers while major ones (including the most important one, the State Oracle, about which more will be said later) were found in some of the larger monastic institutions. This shows that they were well integrated in Tibetan society and that although their personalities were generally the result of psychic abnormalities, they were rarely looked upon as sick but, in a society imbued with the faith in a spiritual world, were taken seriously as mediums of the gods. The Dalai Lama, in a conversation with Günter Schüttler (Schüttler 1971), is quoted as having said:

> This has nothing to do with Buddhism. The oracles are absolutely without importance. They are only small tree-spirits. They do not belong to the three treasures of Buddhism. Relations with them are of no help for our next incarnation. They should be looked upon as a manifestation of popular superstition which is deleterious to the health of human beings.

This pronouncement can be compared to those of high ranking bishops of the Greek Orthodox Church when they condemn the practice of the fire-walking *Anasteriadides,* a ceremony that they disapprove of but are bound to accept because of popular pressure.

Today, since the Chinese occupation of Tibet, many oracles have taken refuge in India. In Dharmsala, Himachal Pradesh, northern India, there

are in exile together with the Dalai Lama, four high ranking oracles, among them the Netchung State Oracle, and in refugee camps throughout the country there are minor oracles, who are still avidly consulted by their fellow Tibetan refugees.

HISTORY

The origin of the Tibetan oracles is mysterious. All that we can say is that they are certainly of great antiquity and antedate Buddhism, which was introduced into the country in the seventh century A.D. They are usually considered to be related to the Central and Arctic Asian shamans, whose geographical proximity makes this hypothesis plausible. What makes this theory, in my opinion, doubtful, however, is the fact that they act rather as mediums for the gods and do not claim to behave in the classical way that shamans do. The shaman, when he goes into a trance, sees his soul leaving his body to visit the world of the spirits in a long, arduous, and sometimes painful trip, returning when it is finished, carrying the message that those who consulted him are expecting. In contrast with this procedure a medium acts as a mouthpiece for the gods or spirits who possess him and speak through him, very often without his own knowledge of what is being said, answering directly the questions of those who consult him. I think, despite the pronouncement of His Holiness quoted above, that this shows an affinity with Indian spiritual practices and India, the country from which Buddhism also entered Tibet. Thus it is recorded that, shortly after the Lord Buddha's death, roughly in the seventh century B.C., *Iddhi* [the control over supernatural forces] very quickly penetrated Buddhism. A work of the first century A.D., the *Saddharma Pundarika,* deals with this question. Again, in southern Buddhism, *Parita* is a magical ritual which the great Indian Buddhist sage, Nagesena, says in the *Milinda Panna* (discussions with the Hellenistic Punjab general and ruler, Menander) was accepted and recognized by "the Blessed One." The practice of magic was not alien to Lamaist practices in Tibet before its occupation, as is witnessed by those institutions which in Lhasa dealt exclusively with it: the monasteries of Moru, Ramoche, and Karmäs.

Oracles came to Tibet together with the early religion of the country, Bön, and from it were carried over to Buddhism. Tradition tells us that the Indian sage, Padmasambhava (Guru Rimpoche), founder of the Samye monastery in central Tibet, installed oracles there. We are told also that these were recognized by Tsong Khapa, the reformer of the Lamaist Church, and later recognized officially by the great fifth Dalai Lama. He was the first to institutionalize the State Oracle of Netchung, as we shall see.

Oracles are described in the Tibetan book *sKu Nga rGyalpo kang-sag*

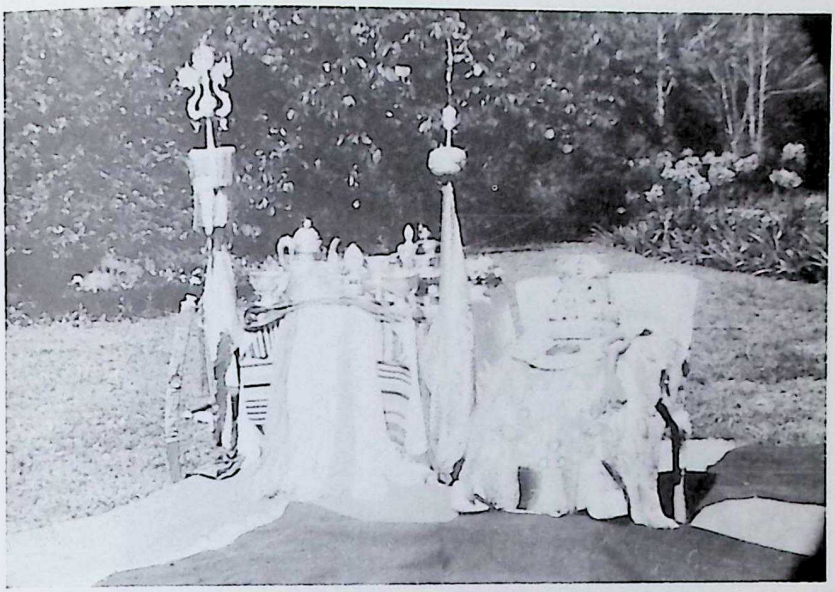

Plate 1. The ritual paraphernalia and uniform of a Tibetan oracle

Plate 2. The heavy helmet (*Tsen-sha*) worn by Tibetan oracles, with the breastpiece (*melong* [mirror]) in front; the *toli* ([sun] of the Arctic shaman?) in front, the scarf (*khatag*) and red loop for catching spirits on the right

Plate 3. Lhag-pa Thöndrup dressing for the séance

Plate 4. Seated on a chair, concentrating himself while a lama attendant plays a drum and cymbals

Plate 5. A calm face before the trance

Plate 6. Concentrating

Plate 7. The spirits taking possession of the oracle

Plate 8. Going deeper into the trance

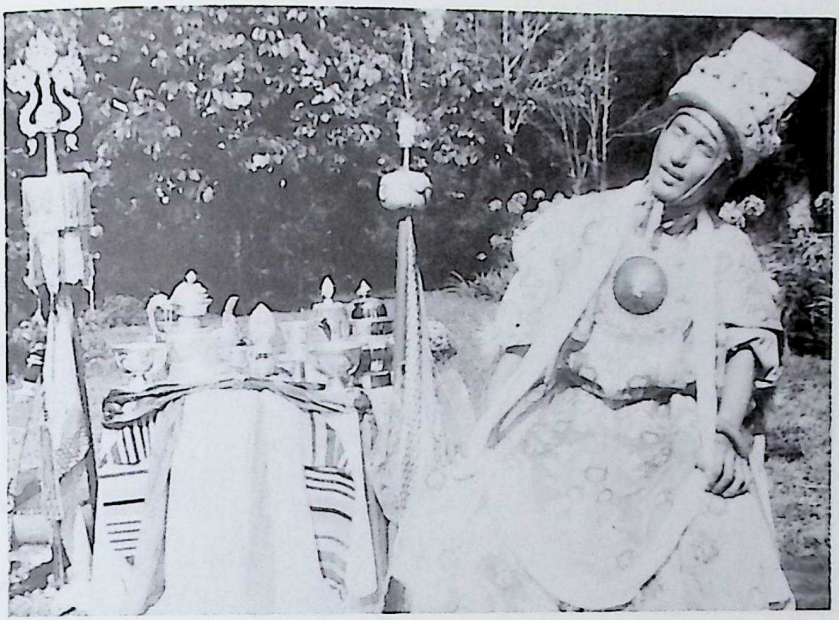

Plate 9. Prophesying under possession

Plate 10. Collapsing after the trance is over, the attendants busying themselves with relieving the oracle of his helmet and clothes

Plate 11. Another trance — that of the *Ge-nyen* or *Jo-wo Ching-karwa* demon of the Amne-Machen range in Amdo (note the Amdo nomad's headgear worn during the trance)

[confessions of the five sacred kings]. The five kings (*rGyalpo sKu Nga*) are: in the east, Samye, where the Body is incarnate; in the west, Netchung, where the Word is incarnate; in the north, Norbu-gang or Karmasar, where Deeds are incarnate; in the south, Gah-dong, where Wisdom is incarnate; in the center there are further places of incarnation such as Lhamo or Tsang-karpo.

L. A. Waddell (1934) sees a connection between these five sacred kings and the five brothers of Ch'ad-duning in Mongolia, which, in his view, establishes a connection with Central Asia.

GRADATION OF ORACLES

Village oracles are of various categories; they are known as *Lha-ka, Ku-tempa, Nak-pa,* etc. Their popular name is *Chos-dje.*

In Kalimpong, on the northern border of West Bangal, I had the opportunity to study the local *Chos-dje,* Lhag-pa Thöndrup, who served the needs of 3,500 Tibetans resident there. He is the same man described by Günter Schüttler (1971), although his study took place some years later and after Lhag-pa Thöndrup had gone through a harrowing period. I have described my study in *Folk* (1961), and I include here some photographs taken at the time (see Plates 1–11). Subsequent to my interviews

with Lhag-pa Thöndrup, he abandoned the profession and sold me his uniform, which is now a prize exhibit of the Tibetan collection in the National Museum of Copenhagen. The reason he did this was that while being possessed by the spirit of Dorje Chung-den, one of the protective deities of Tibetan Buddhism, he nearly died of suffocation while swallowing a *khatag* [silken presentation scarf]; this was the horrible way in which the person whose spirit possessed him was assassinated by enemies.

It seems, however, that he was not able to remain very long outside the profession and returned to it with a new set of clothes. In a séance which I filmed and sound-recorded, the Kalimpong *Chos-dje* was possessed in one afternoon by no less than four spirits, a very exhausting performance as I could see. Questions were put to him, and he answered them somewhat indistinctly and certainly ambiguously, as seems to have been the practice of all good oracles ever since the Delphic Pythia. In order to induce a trance, a drum and cymbals, played by a lama, were used. It should be noted that the oracle himself does not handle the instruments as a shaman would. He concentrates himself very visibly, and the trance comes upon him surprisingly quickly. When questioned about what he used to induce a trance, he first said that the used nothing more than drumming and concentration; he later admitted (although reluctantly because, as he said, it is prohibited) that in some cases as a prelude he took a mixture of red pepper and hashish. Schüttler mentions other inducements such as monotonous praying, autosuggestion, deep breathing that changes the metabolism, and the strangulating effect of the tightness of the chinstrap of the heavy helmet that he wears, all of which certainly play a role.

Some oracles of a higher grade are the following: *Tsin-marpo* at the monastery of Samye who wears a red-brown mask (hence his name), which he keeps with him in a box; he has a locked room in which he operates where Tibetans believe he hacks souls to pieces. *Dzasa-marpo* [the red Dzasa] is a Lhasa nobleman who made an enemy of Pehar (or Pekar), a pre-Buddhist devil by whom he was killed; he was enthroned after his death at Samye, the original seat of the demon, by his servants who wished to avenge their master. *Karma-shar,* the oracle of the Sera monastery in Lhasa, is known also as "the king of the body"; he goes ceremoniously in procession through the city in the seventh month of the Tibetan year accompanied by the outcaste Tibetan disposers of the dead (the *Ragya-pa*). The prophecy he delivers on this occasion is written down and nailed to the door of his temple for all to read. The *Gadong Chos-dje* is the companion of Pehar known also as "the wooden bird." The *Lubug Tshu-shi* oracle specializes in the cure of madness; he proceeds by searching the body of the insane with a *melong* [a mirror], then using an arrow he "takes" a piece of flesh out (a piece of meat which no doubt he had up his sleeve) which is supposed to contain the devil that is harrassing the victim;

he chews the piece of meat, then spits it out into a vessel containing liquid and drinks the whole to effect the cure. At Sera there is a female oracle, the only woman oracle, who is intimately connected with the order of militant lamas, the *Dop-dop*. The *Lugn-tö* oracle in central Tibet, a money-lending oracle, when he is consulted, vomits coins while in a trance; the money has to be paid back later, and reimbursement is effected by the oracle covering the coins with saffron powder and swallowing them one by one again while in a trance.

I come now to the State Oracle of Netchung, who is the best known and at the apex of the hierarchy. He is now in exile together with the Dalai Lama, and I would very much like to have an interview with him. He is the incarnation of the pre-Buddhist devil, the three-headed and six-armed Pehar. Waddell (1934) suggests that he may be another form of the "white overcast sky demon" of the Turki and suggests that the reason the saga of King Kesar of Ling cannot be recited at the monastery of Drepung, which is close to the place where the Netchung oracle has his seat, is that King Kesar conquered the Turki. Here again we find a pre-Buddhist connection with Central Asia. The oracle is said to have been brought to Tibet in the reign of the Tibetan king Thi sRong Detsan by Padmasambhava and enthroned in the monastery of Samye as its guardian. Originally, the incarnation was not a lama but a layman who could marry and have children. This is given as a reason why he refused, as we shall see, to live within the precincts of Drepung monastery.

Under the fifth Dalai Lama, Pehar is said to have left Samye for Tsheltung Th'ang, which lies approximately three miles southeast of Lhasa. Here he came into conflict with a lama named Z'ang. This lama forbade the decorator of the monastery to paint a fresco of Pehar in the temple. Whereupon Pehar turned himself into a young assistant to the painter and got the latter to paint a monkey with a torch in his hand instead. The picture came to life and the monkey set fire to the monastery. Lama Z'ang was very angry and, having contrived a *dö* [devil trap], caught Pehar in it and put him into a wooden box, which he threw into the *Kyi-chu* [the river of Lhasa]. The box floated down to Drepung where the fifth Dalai Lama noticed it and ordered it to be brought to him. The abbot of Drepung did this and, as he was carrying the box on land, it got heavier and heavier. Unable to continue, he stopped and opened it to see what could be inside it. Whereupon Pehar flew out in the form of a dove and settled on a tree, which the Dalai Lama accepted as the abode in which he had chosen to live.

Netchung, which means "the small dwelling" and is located some six miles from Drepung, was built around the tree and has remained the habitat of the State Oracle ever since. The temple has three doors with a large painting of Dorje-chang on the middle one. It is always locked because that Buddhist deity is considered to be Pehar's successor. The

building has three floors and a golden roof. The original tree still stands in one of the rooms. In another room the State Oracle sits on a throne to prophesy. Behind him is a large statue of Padmasambhava. Once a year on the second day of the first month of the Tibetan year, the Netchung oracle goes in procession to Lhasa accompanied by the Drepung magistrate. He sets himself up in a special temple east of the Lhasa cathedral, the *Jo-khang,* where he now makes prophecies for the whole year. Apart from this ceremonial appearance, he is regularly consulted by the Tibetan government on questions of policy. He can also be consulted privately by anybody but, curiously, against payment. His prophecies are in the name of Pehar, whose spirit possesses him, but he is, notwithstanding, responsible for what he says and can be penalized for false utterances! At his death, a successor is found among candidates in competition. The winner must be able to bend a sword "which eighteen men cannot bend." One of my Tibetan teachers in Kalimpong, Lobsang P'hüntsok Lha-lung pa, was the son of a Netchung oracle (the one before the last) who had married and founded a family. During the flight of the Dalai Lama to Yatung in the Chumbi Valley at the time of the invasion of Tibet by the Chinese armies in 1950, the Netchung oracle was consulted repeatedly as to what course of action the Tibetan ruler should take. Should he take refuge in India or should he stay in Tibet? Twice the oracle said that he should stay in Tibet despite attempts by the government to get him to say the contrary. It is said that it was eventually discovered that he had been bribed to deliver his message by the pro-Chinese monks of Sera, who also occupied the passes to Sikkim with armed guards to keep the Dalai Lama from escaping abroad.

In conclusion, I will say that this is a somewhat sketchy and incomplete account of Tibetan oracles but I hope that, however imperfect, it will stimulate discussion of this subject.

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Some Aspects of Pön

CHÖGYAM TRUNGPA

In the Tibetan language Pön means "way of life," and is traditionally interpreted in the sense of "basic law." The Tibetan name for Tibet is Pöd. In classical Tibetan writing the letters rendering the English "n" and English "d" were often used interchangeably as the final letters of syllables. For example, the title of the early Tibetan monarchs (meaning "powerful one") could be written either *tzedpo* [btsad-po] or *tzenpo* [btsan-po].[1] Many such examples could be given. Moreover, until about the seventh century A.D., Tibet was referred to by its inhabitants as Pön, and Pöd was adopted only later. This is verified by the ancient scrolls found in caves in Afghanistan early in this century, as well as by ancient Khotanese scrolls which tell of taxes paid to "the great king of Pön." Thus, the name of the Tibetan religion was, at least archaically, synonymous with the nation itself.

At the time of its first appearance in Tibet in the seventh century, Buddhism was restricted to the royal household. As we learn from the *Gyelrap Tsarma* [rgyal-rap-gsar-ma], the biography of the first Buddhist king Tsongtsen Gampo [srong-btsan-sgam-po], it became necessary to separate religion and nationalism in the public mind, so that the new religion would not be considered a threat to the national identity itself. Through his progressive attitude of compassion and nonviolence, Tsongtsen Gampo managed to convert some of his ministers and also built magnificent temples to house the objects of worship of his two Buddhist queens, but he never managed to disseminate Buddhism on a nationwide scale. The grandson of Tsongtsen Gampo, Khrisong Deptsen [khri-srong-sde-btsan], who reigned from 775 to 797, was converted to

[1] I have used the phonic spelling of Tibetan terms. The transliterated spelling, where different, follows the first appearance of each term in brackets.

Buddhism by the renowned Tantric master Padmasambhava and promulgated many laws prohibiting Pön practices and beliefs considered contrary to Buddhism. For example, he banned sacrificial ceremonies and belief in a cosmic creator.

Eventually most Pön texts were destroyed or subjected to heavy Buddhist editing. Nevertheless, the fundamentals of Pön belief can be derived from some surviving Pön texts.

Pön religion is concerned with the creation of the universe and of the Tibetan people in such a way as to consecrate the existence, the country, the customs, and the habits of the Tibetan people. In Buddhism, by contrast, spirituality arises in the far more abstract context of psychological evolution, typified by the doctrine of the five skandhas found in the Abhidharma literature. The spirituality of Pön is founded on a cosmological reality. Nine gods created a world in which birth, death, marriage, and sickness all have their place. If the worshiper can attune himself to those gods through various ritualistic ceremonies and through the understanding of these ceremonies, he is in a position to fulfill whatever is demanded of him by the cosmic order. In the absence of surviving Pön philosophical sources, an understanding of their cosmology must be derived from ritual texts left intact as a result of the assimilation of the ceremonies by Buddhism.

The nature of the Pön divinities can be discerned from Pön practices and iconography. The supreme deity in Pön has the same quality of cosmic totality found in most theistic religions. This supreme divine principle is referred to as *yeshen* [ye-bshen]. *Ye* means "primordial" or "original"; *shen* means "divine, heavenly, or spiritual," but it also has an anthropomorphic connotation. The impression is of a divine ancestor. *Shen* also has the sense of "friend" or "ally," a benign quality. The ancestor aspect brings the richness of age into the conception of the divinity. *Yeshen* is seen as passive and peaceful, furthering the idea of a final peaceful rest for the worshiper.

The energetic aspect in the divine is represented by another principle — *Sê* [gsas]. Sê is primarily vengeful in character and communicates directly with man. He creates the link between the absolute, divine plane and the relative plane of man. He is seen as a powerful warrior. He is the one the Pön worshiper calls God (*lha*). The national king of Tibet also had the title *lha* and possessed as well the image of a powerful warrior. In ancient times the capital of Tibet also took the name Lhasa (*sa* means "place"). Thus the seat of the king was identified with the seat of God.

The nine cosmos-creating deities (including Sê himself) are part of the Sê principle. Only through the mediation of Sê or through the other figures that manifest his principle can the worshiper communicate with Yeshen. There is the feeling that, if properly appealed to, Sê could approach Yeshen to redispose of the ultimate energy of the universe in a

way more favorable to the worshiper. The other eight deities are regarded as messengers (*dêgyê* [sde-brgyad]) of Sê. The *dêgyê*s might more accurately be regarded as types or principles than as individual beings because there may be many local manifestations of each *dêgyê*'s essential character. Each *dêgyê* also has a retinue of minions, attendants, helpers, etc., operating according to the desires of that *dêgyê*.

A general iconographical feature of Sê and the *dêgyê*s is the *per,* a kimono-like garment reaching to the ankles with wide, triangular sleeves and a pleat over each hip. The *per* was the garment of ancient Tibetan royalty. The warlike figures wear armor beneath the *per* and helmets adorned with pennants in their special colors. The pennants vary according to the status of the figure.

Sê wears a white *per* and crystal armor and helmet — white is associated with divinity, being pure and containing all the other colors. He rides a white horse with turquoise wings.

The only female *dêgyê* is Lu [Klu], associated with water. Bringing rain, she also brings fertility. Thus she is the patron deity of women, especially young maidens. Lakes and sources of springs, where shrines have been built, are sacred to her. Lu punishes with leprosy, rheumatism, and skin diseases. She can be propitiated with offerings of what are called the three whites and three sweets. The three whites are curd, milk, and butter. The three sweets are *gur* [brown sugar], crystal sugar, and honey. Lu is associated with snakes, blue-gray horses, and blue-gray mules.

Lu wears a gown of feathers and seamless watersilk representing mist. She rides a blue horse with white stripes in water designs and holds a crystal vase filled with gems.

Tsen [Btsan] is the god of fire and has the power of instant destruction. He is associated with speed and actions, especially destructive ones. Because of the swiftness of his horse and his quickness to anger, he kills his enemies not externally but by instantly entering their bodies through the mouth or anus. He is the patron deity of bandits and warriors. Ills associated with him are heart attack or death by accident. Making fire in inappropriate places, roasting meat, or in general creating disturbances or disharmony in any environment are offensive to him. Goat blood and goat meat are offered to Tsen. He is associated with brown horses and jackals. Tsen wears copper armor beneath his red *per* and rides a red roan. His image is associated with blood and fire and he strikes at sunset. He holds a scimitar and a lasso.

Another *dêgyê* is Therong [Theh'rang], who is thought to be embodied in boulders and ashes, as well as in dice. He brings success in games, particularly dice, but also any board games. In ancient warfare, he was thought to guide the trajectories of catapulted boulders. Fever and dizziness are associated with him. The appropriate offering to him is popped barley with milk. He is the patron god of children and blacksmiths and to

a certain extent he is also associated with rain. Therong rides a goat and wears a goatskin over his black *per*. He carries a bellows and a hammer.

Dû [Bdut] is associated with darkness. He brings bad luck unless propitiated with offerings of leftovers. He is connected with crows and black pigs. Dû rides a black horse with a white blaze and wears iron armor and helmet and a black *per*. He holds a sword and a spear with a black banner and carries fastened to his saddle a waterbag filled with poison, a long black board with a handle with his victims' names inscribed on it, and a ball of multicolored thread with a life of its own that can leap from its place and bind up a victim in an excruciating manner.

Chuglha [Phyug-lha] is the god of wealth. He rewards thrift with prosperity and punishes waste with poverty. He can also bring rheumatism, ulcers and swelling diseases. He is the patron deity of merchants and of the household and is offered butter and grain. He is associated with the earth, as well as with sheep, yaks, and horses. Chuglha rides a yellow horse or a lion. He wears a golden *per* over golden armor and a golden hat with four sides in the stylized form of flower petals. He carries a multicolored, cylinder-shaped victory banner in his right hand and a scroll in his left. He vomits gems.

Nyen [Nyan] is the god of Tibetan folk culture and the patron of rulers and all patriots. He is associated with the mountains. He is offered cheese, the three whites and three sweets, and the spikelets of grain plants. He is offended by the chopping down of any trees that may be held sacred locally, by the digging up of sacred ground, by the smell of burnt food, and by the beams of torches or lamps cast on the tops of hills or mountains consecrated to him. He punishes by magnifying physical weaknesses and causing domestic chaos. The horse and deer (especially the musk deer) are his sacred animals, as well as quadrupeds in general and birds. His female counterpart is associated with storms and weather. The color of Nyen's armor and *per* vary locally but are most often white. He carries a white pennant banner and either a platter or vase of jewels. The color of his horse also varies from place to place.

Za [gZa'] is the god of psychological energy, lightning, hailstorms, and, more recently, electricity. When disturbed, he can addle the senses or cause epileptic fits and madness. He can be offended by the interruption of anything continuous — for example, by the cutting of a rope or by the spoilage of paint or ink. He is mollified by offerings of goat meat and goat blood. He is the patron of magicians and is associated with dragons. Za rides an angry crocodile. He has eighteen faces, one for each kind of mythical lightning dragon. These are topped by a raven's head that shoots out lightning bolts. He is six-armed and holds a victory banner, a snake lasso, a bag of poisonous water, a bow, and a bundle of arrows. He has a large mouth in his belly and his body is covered with eyes.

Drala [Dgra-lha] is the god of war and patron of warlords and warriors.

He is identified to some degree with storms and storm clouds. He is offended by mistreatment of weapons. He punishes by humiliation and scandal, insomnia and nightmare, and even by loss of one's *la* [bla] [soul]. He is offered barley beer, tea, and the three whites and the three sweets. The white yak, horse, eagle, and raven are sacred to him. Drala rides a horse, usually reddish brown. He wears armor and helmet of lacquered metal and a red *per*. Eighteen pennants fly from his helmet. He holds a long-staffed flag with eighteen ribbons flying at its edge. He wears a belt which holds a bow and arrows, a lasso, an axe, a spear, a dagger, a sword, and other instruments of war. He emits a tiger from his body, a black bear with a white heart from one of his legs, a jackal from each eye, and a hawk and eagle from his head.

Having thus far given an impression of the divinities and powers in Pön belief, an account of some of the customs and practices relating to the life situations of the Pön believer will provide further insight into the world of Pön.

The Pön considered birth extremely sacred, but women were considered impure since they represented the temptation of passion. Thus a mother-to-be was required to lie in and remain in the barn until she had given birth. Pön fostered tremendous reverence for the holiness and the wisdom of the old. Thus, it was the grandmother who, at the first appearance of the morning star, fetched water from the brook and brought it to the mother and infant. (The morning star was believed to be the star of the forehead, which represents wisdom and learnedness. It also contains the idea of newness. In the Pön calendar the change of date takes place when the morning star appears, inviting the dawn.) Once the child was born, it was identified with its family heritage — its family mountain, its family lake, its family tree, among other things. It was also assigned a turquoise stone, as the family possessed one for each of its members.

The rite associated with birth (as well as sickness) is called *lalhu* [bla-bslu] [ransoming the *la*]. The word *la* is similar in meaning to the word "soul." Any human being possesses consciousness, (*sems*), a *la*, and *sog* [srog] [life]. In the Pön tradition, animals do not possess a *la*. The *la* can be stolen, confiscated, or regained, and it can be reinforced by spiritual power. It is born when the child leaves the womb and is confirmed when the umbilicus is cut. Butter and milk are associated with the *la* because of their white color which represents goodness or divinity. In the *lalhu* ceremony, which is still practiced, an image of a sheep is made from butter and the infant (or sick person) is washed in milk.

According to Pön tradition, the site for a new house should be chosen by a person known for his wisdom and understanding. Four elements are important. The building must be situated so that a mountain of Nyen is behind it, that is, to the west. This mountain, called the *lhari* [mountain of God], should be a rocky mountain, preferably covered with red lichen,

the whole resembling a great red bird. The house is thus protected, like a child in its mother's lap. There should also be a mountain on the front side but not so high as the one in back. It should be somewhat chalky in composition, ideally resembling a white tiger. On the right there should be a river running in an open valley. The course of the river should resemble a dragon. On the left there should be a screen of mountains resembling a tortoise's back. The tops and ridges of this northern range should not be jagged but present a solid mass because sharply defined gaps in the silhouette of a mountain are considered to represent the teeth of death and could bring death to the family. Any decayed or dead trees around the site portend accident and are cut down if not found to be the haunt of some local god.

The traditional first step in approaching the site is to build a tower (*semkhar* [gsas-mkhar]) on top of the *lhari.* The tower is intended as a shrine to Sê, the local Nyen, or any other *dêgyê* that is thought to be powerful in the area. It invites their blessing on the site. In the ceremony for consecrating the tower, a wool cord is extended in four directions to act as a guide for Sê when he descends from heaven. Certain areas around the tower are sacrosanct; no one goes there except to make an offering.

A purifying ceremony called *lhasang* [lha-bsangs] is quite often performed on auspicious occasions (even by Buddhists in Tibet). A fire is built with cedar needles and offerings are made of the three whites and three sweets, *tsampa* rubbed in butter with popped barley, and chalices of barley beer, tea, and milk. Yeshen, Sê, and the eight *dêgyê*s are thought to descend from heaven by way of the smoke from the fire. The cedar is Sê's tree and its wood and smoke are considered ritually pure. The ceremony is intended to bring the divine into human life and the particular event in honor of which it is performed into divine life.

When this ceremony was assimilated by Buddhism, various Buddhas replaced the Pön deities. Because the concept of the Buddhas was far less concrete, far more metaphysical than that of the Pön deities, the simple folk participating in the ceremonies remained uncertain about its precise meaning. They accepted them matter-of-factly as ritual blessings on the part of the monk celebrants.

Sickness is thought by Pön believers to be caused directly or indirectly by the *dêgyê*s or by certain evil forces. It begins through the weakening of a person's vitality, which might be caused by a *dön* [gdon]. *Dön*s lurk furtively outside the dominion of Yeshen and, like a hungry ghost or thieving dog, they are timid but persistent once they take hold. A *dön* enters the system of a person who has abused the divine order or perhaps of a person in a moment of depression or weakness. Once a person is possessed by a *dön*, there is an opening for a minion of one of the *dêgyê*s to steal his *la*. If the minion succeeds, it is possible for him to attack and capture the *sog* by causing sickness. Success at this means death. If the

illness is a result of punishment inflicted by one of the eight *dêgyê*s, life can be taken without going through the above stages. A *dêgyê* can take control of the *sog* directly. A *dön* or a minion of a *dêgyê* takes a *la* or *sog* because he can use it to add to his own presence and vitality.

Healing takes different forms depending on the cause of the sickness. In some cases a ceremony against a *dön* can be performed by making an effigy of the sick person and offering it to the *dön* as a substitute together with some of the sick person's flesh and hair or clothes. Or, if a highly accomplished priest is available, he may perform a rite to attract all the *dön*s in the area and frighten them off by manifesting himself as the wrathful Sê. If this succeeds, the illness ends. If it fails, the *lalhu* ceremony is performed.

According to Pön belief, the *la* is an entity which is part of one's being but is unintelligent. It can be activated by any form of warmth or invitation. The *lalhu* ceremony is performed partly to give a ransom to the confiscator of the *la*, but also to reactivate it in the sick person. To do this, certain objects are reconsecrated: the person's turquoise stone; his *la* cup (a cup owned by each individual specifically for this purpose); the thighbone of a sheep inscribed with the person's name; and his astrological chart. These are wrapped with colored threads representing the five elements, with the element of the person's birth year in the center. If this is effective, the illness is cured.

If this process fails, it is a very serious illness — a matter of life and death. Then an accomplished priest must be summoned to perform the *tô* [gto] rite, which invokes the power of Sê and calls forth the eight *dêgyê*s. The priest offers them small structures, resembling little houses fashioned out of thread, as dwelling places.[2]

A more powerful ceremony, called *dö* [mdos], is often used by Buddhists, invoking the *gönpo*s [mgon-po; Sanskrit *mahakala*] [protectors]. The Pön ceremony invokes the *dêgyê* thought to be involved in the illness. In this ceremony the *dêgyê* is offered a new castle, a very elaborate miniature construction called the *dö*. The intent of the rite is to lure him into the *dö*, not only out of the sick person but also out of his own dwelling place. Daily offerings are made and at the end of a certain period there is a special session in which the *dö* is finally offered to the *dêgyê* if he will quit the sick person.

There are further ceremonies of this nature which can be performed only by priests of the highest accomplishment. In one of these, the priest threatens to destroy the *dö* if the *dêgyê* refuses to release the sick person. In a still more drastic rite the priest identifies with Sê and thus with the *dêgyê*s and, calling them, he imprisons them in certain appropriate sacred objects which he then buries. If the priest fails in the execution

[2] These thread structures closely resemble the Mexican Indian "god's eyes."

of this ceremony, it is considered a catastrophe because the attempt enrages the *dêgyê*s and they seek revenge, quite possibly on the priest himself.

Many more aspects of the Pön religion could be described, but it may be more useful to give some idea of the methods used for achieving union with Yeshen.

Accurate information concerning higher spiritual training in Pön is extremely difficult to obtain. In the available materials there exist only sketchy data concerning this training, obscured by overlays of popular Buddhism. Moreover, present-day Pön priests speak a great deal in Buddhist terms, drawing parallels between the highlights of their doctrine and Buddhist teachings.

The investigation of the Pön religion is further complicated by what is called in Tibet "white Pön," which is what amounts to a Pönnized Buddhism. In "white Pön," Buddhism has been adopted basically, but Buddha is called Shenrap, the Buddhist *vajra* is replaced by an anticlockwise swastika,[3] and the bodhisattva is called *yungdrungsempa* [yungdrumsems-pa], that is, *swastiksattva.* Where a text mentions "dharma," the word "pön" is substituted. There are Pön equivalent names for all the Buddhas and bodhisattvas, and also for the ten stages of the Bodhisattva Path, that is, the Sanskrit *bhumis.* The contemporary Pön believer is therefore a poor source of information concerning the pure tradition of his religion.

The higher teachings of Pön were transmitted by the sage Shenrap Miwo [Bshen-rap Miwo]. *Shen* means "heavenly," as mentioned above; *rap* means "supreme one"; and *miwo* means "great man." Shenrap lived long before Buddha. The Shenrap myth refers to Buddha, the teacher of wisdom, to Gaisar, the teacher of war,[4] to the Lord of Tagsig [stag-gsigs], the teacher of the law of wealth, and so forth. All these are considered incarnations of Shenrap. The work of Shenrap exists in some 400 volumes in Tibet but has undergone heavy Buddhist editing. The few books that have not fallen into Buddhist hands give some clue as to how the practitioner should proceed on the path of Pön.

The acquisition of spiritual understanding in Pön is based on the concept of *tendrel* [brten-a' brel] [cosmic law]. This is similar to the Buddhist term *nidana.* Both concepts present the flow of events as a causal chain. But whereas the Buddhist concept suggests the matter-of-fact and inevitable nature of fate, *tendrel* suggests the idea of an influenceable agency. In the Pön idea one who attunes himself, through the

[3] The *swastika* in Pön represents an unchanging and indestructible quality. In this it is like the Buddhist *vajra*. But it differs in that it connotes richness and plenty. It is often used as a symbol of wealth, appearing as a decoration on an individual's "*Chuglha* bag," a bag containing objects sacred to the god of wealth.

[4] One cannot help noticing the similarity between Gaisar and Caesar.

appropriate rites and practices, to the rhythm of the interdependence of events is not in danger of being rejected by it. Understanding it, he can read its signs. He can, by invoking the name of Yeshen in the appropriate manner and by including repetitions of his own name, call the gods to himself as allies and defenders.

The practitioner must acquire the ability to see the Yeshen quality in every life situation. If he is able to do this, guidance for the further application of his practice comes from Sê, pointing him in the appropriate spiritual direction. Pön, unlike the religious outgrowths of the Aryan culture, especially Hinduism, Buddhism, and Jainism in their quasi-popular forms, gave little heed to the pursuit of salvation through the practice of austerities. Pön philosophy speaks of Yeshen as reflected in the interplay between heaven and earth. Thus the Pön aspirant sought magical power through union with the Yeshen nature as manifested in mountains, trees, lakes, and rivers — all of which are very impressively present in Tibet. There is a strong orientation towards waterfalls, falling snow, clouds, and mist arising from the deep valleys, which are regarded as activities of Yeshen. Belief in the magic of these natural features is paramount.

In attempting to commune with Yeshen, the practitioner must first find the highest peak in the area. He invokes the name of Yeshen in the *lhasang* practice previously noted. Burning the cedar needles is one of the main means of communicating with Yeshen. The devotee becomes absorbed in the smoke of the ritual fire. Certain messages come from the patterns of the rising smoke, e.g., slowly, gently rising white smoke signifies acceptance; dark smoke constantly interrupted by wind signifies obstacles.

There also remain some incantations in the ancient Shangshung language, which there is reason to believe may have been the ancestor of the Tibetan language. These incantations are thought to develop spiritual power, especially when accompanied by certain physical motions in the form of a dance. It is believed that there were also visualizations of Pön deities meant to be combined with the incantation-and-dance practice, but of these we know nothing.

It seems that another important Pön practice was the anticlockwise circling of a mountain sacred to Sê and the *dêgyê*s, performing the *lhasang* ritual at various points along the way.[5]

When the practitioner completed his intensive training in these practices he demonstrated that he had achieved power by throwing butter sculptures into boiling water and pulling them out again intact, or by licking hot iron.

[5] This practice is strikingly similar to a practice of the Japanese Yamabushi cult, a semi-Buddhist Shinto sect.

Pön is a vast and largely untreated subject. In attempting an account of it, one finds that a great deal remains unsaid. Nevertheless it is hoped that the outlines for an accurate picture of this religion have been sketched and some idea given of its nature.

Tibetan Bön Rites in China: A Case of Cultural Diffusion

ANTHONY JACKSON

Between the seventeenth and twentieth centuries the Na-khi people of Southwest China developed a vast ritual repertoire based upon an indigenous pictographic script. Some 10,000 of these manuscripts are recorded in libraries around the world at present.[1] This outburst of literary activity in the remote valleys of upper Yün-nan province among a Tibeto-Burman speaking people, numbering only a couple of thousand households and who otherwise are illiterate, calls for an explanation. This paper summarizes the course of events which led to this unique phenomenon and discusses, with reference to one particular rite, the nature of this new religion. As the title indicates, the explanation is framed in terms of a diffusion of Tibetan Bön religion to this area. The problem is how to account for this peculiar turn of events.

Today the Na-khi number some 140,000 people who are chiefly congregated in the bend of the Yangtze Kiang above and around their capital Li-chiang, which they settled a thousand years ago. They are one of the many ethnic minorities that inhabit this part of China (other tribes include the Lo-lo, Lisu, Min-chia) and they live close to the borders of Burma and Tibet, on the trade route from Chamdo and Lhasa to southern China and Southeast Asia. They were liberated by the Red Army in 1949 and now form an autonomous unit in the Republic of China.

Before 1949 the Na-khi were a society of small farmers cultivating wheat and rice who also raised sheep on the mountain pastures. They were little different from the many other tribes in the area except for one peculiar feature. Had one entered a village of a couple of hundred

[1] A detailed account of how these Na-khi manuscripts were collected and where they are today is given in Jackson (1965).

households, in one of them, not otherwise distinguished from the rest, one would have found on an inside wall a shelf containing on it a pile of books, a Buddhist five-lobed crown, a blue dress, a sword, a gong, and various other bits of ritual paraphernalia. This house would belong to a *dto-mba*, a part-time ritual specialist who practiced in each village. At first glance, one might be inclined to associate the *dto-mba* with some Tibetan Buddhist sect, especially when one learns that there are several Red Sect monasteries near the capital, Li-chiang, and since so much of the ritual equipment seems Tibetan. Even the handwritten books are Tibetan in format but here the first differences become apparent. These manuscripts are not written in Tibetan but in pictographs, small drawings of animals, plants, objects and humanlike beings. The text is in fact written in Na-khi, a monosyllabic tongue, yet it is no mere translation from Tibetan as it corresponds to no known Tibetan text. The problem arises as to where the pronounced Tibetan influence comes from?

These *dto-mbas* are individualists, they are not members of a sect, neither are they priests for they have no churches, temples, or monasteries. They are not even shamans for there is another ritual specialist, the *llü-bu*, who is a shaman and falls into trances. The *dto-mba* is called to perform his ceremonies in people's courtyards in cases of illness, death, or misfortune and is paid a fee for his services. When he is not conducting his rites the *dto-mba* is a farmer like everyone else.

Today, all that remains are the books in our libraries, books that no one can read. At one time, each *dto-mba* had his own set of books which he alone in the village could read. This means there were tens of thousands of these books in Na-khi territory, yet, despite the lack of formal organization, the books could be read by all *dto-mbas*. How could such uniformity come about?

To set about answering some of these problems, a quarter of a century after these books were last used, the best way is to trace how we came to possess so many manuscripts and then to go on to discuss how they were interpreted.

The first copies of Na-khi (or Mo-so) texts were collected a century ago by explorers and missionaries who sent them back to Europe where they were hailed as examples of mankind's earliest script: pictographs. Although the Na-khi were not alone in having an indigenous script in this part of the world, theirs was the only pictographic one. Then, traveling botanists brought back samples of these books along with exotic rhododendra and sold them for profit. By 1922 the John Rylands Library in Manchester had the world's largest collection of Na-khi books — 135 of them. The British collection was more than doubled after the consul in Tengyueh purchased a further 190 volumes for the nation. This scoop included fifty-five volumes of the *Szi chung bpö* ceremony for the Prolongation of Life which will be discussed later in this paper. That was in

1931. No more manuscripts were bought because a mild inflation had set in as the result of massive purchases by the American botanist, J. F. Rock. However, at this time there was little knowledge of the content of these texts apart from the fact that they concerned ritual; nobody could decipher the pictographs.

Rock turned out to be the biggest collector of Na-khi books (he gathered more than 7,000), and he also became the principal scholar in Na-khi studies (1947, 1948, 1952, 1955, 1963, 1965). He settled in Li-chiang and devoted half his life to translating and annotating these manuscripts. Most of his major publications appeared after his expulsion from the area in 1949, and they came out in a steady stream up to his death a decade ago. His spadework revealed that there were some 130 different ceremonies performed by the *dto-mbas* which included 1,000 constituent rites: each such rite had its own manuscript. He also listed some 2,000 named spirits and gods which the Na-khi believed in. After forty years of endeavor he only managed to translate parts of six of the ceremonies, but these translations are formidable pieces of German erudition, packed with information. Unfortunately, the density of exposition obscures more than it clarifies, and the problems raised by this paper are not answered.

In Rock's view, Na-khi ritual is the living remnants of the ancient, pure Bön religion of old Tibet. This conclusion is disputed elsewhere (Jackson 1970) and will not be repeated here. Rock assumes that the obvious Bön elements in Na-khi ritual are simply a survival of practices which the Na-khi carried with them when they migrated from northeast Tibet a millenium ago (cf., Tucci [1949] for similar myths of origin of Tibetan royal families). He also assumes that the pictographic writings are of great date and that the *dto-mbas* are indigenous ritual specialists who preserved their Bön ideas unsullied through the centuries. Such an interpretation raises more problems than it answers and, therefore, will be rejected here. One surmises that Rock fell victim to the *dto-mbas*' own propaganda about the antiquity of their rites. An alternative explanation is offered in this paper which briefly, and somewhat dogmatically, states what appears to have occurred.

The crux of the matter lies in the perennial quarrels between the different sects of Buddhism within Tibet, the so-called Yellow, Red, and Black hats. The Na-khi kingdom lay astride the trade route southeast from Tibet to Burma, China, and Thailand. Thus, to Chinese eyes the Na-khi kingdom was a buffer state between them and Tibet while to the Tibetans it was an entrepot for southern trade. The Chinese had long recognized the strategic importance of the Na-khi and had showered gifts and titles upon their king for protecting the imperial frontiers. In the seventeenth century the rivalry between the Tibetan sects flared up as they competed in gaining adherents in the Sino-Tibetan marches, the

traditional stronghold of the Black or Bön sect.[2] The outcome was that the Black sect was squashed between the anvil of the older Red sect and the hammer of the triumphant Yellow sect, the result being that members of the Bön sect were proscribed in those areas which were dominated by either of the two more powerful sects.

The Na-khi kings had been converted to the Red sect at the end of the sixteenth century and all other sects were forbidden to practice there, but it was only the royal family that became Buddhists; the common people were not converted. On several counts, such as the missing dedication stones in the Red sect's temples and the continuing existence of Bön temples in the far hinterland of Na-khi territory, it is postulated that the Na-khi once were adherents of the reformed Bön sect. However, at this stage, circa 1600, there would be no pictographic writing or books since Bön was written in Tibetan. Nevertheless, the Na-khi had writing — phonetic scripts — similar to today's writing among the neighboring Lo-lo. This script was introduced by Kublai Khan in 1253 when he set his Mongol officers in charge of the region; the genealogy of the Na-khi kings is traced back to these men.[3]

The turning point came in 1700 when the Yellow sect converted that part of Na-khi territory to the north of the Yangtze, among the Hli-khin branch, when ruler and ruled were all made subject to the Yellow sect. Immediately there was an influx of proscribed Bön monks into the decaying kingdom around Li-chiang as the Yellow sect purged their new territory. The Chinese, alarmed at the civil wars in Tibet and the spreading influence of the militant Yellow sect, decided to step in and they nationalized the Na-khi kingdom, south of the Yangtze, in 1723. The opium-besotted king was deposed, and a Chinese magistrate was installed, charged with civilizing these barbarians. Two results followed: the kinship system was changed and the religious practices were altered.

Originally the Na-khi were matrilineal and practiced patrilateral cross-cousin marriage (the Hli-khin branch still retain this system)[4] but this had to be altered if the Na-khi were to become Chinese citizens. The powerful matrilineages had to be broken if the ideal of filial obedience was to be instilled, so the Chinese changed the inheritance laws, marriage customs, and funerary observances to suit. Henceforward, property was to be passed from father to son (as the sinicized kings had always done) and Chinese-style betrothal patterns were enforced while the dead were to be buried and not cremated. The surprising consequence was a

2 This is mentioned in Stein (1961) where he discusses the ritual importance of the Na-khi king.

3 A history of the Na-khi is given by Rock (1947) where details of the rulers may be found.

4 Cf. Reshetov (1964) for a brief description of the Hli-khin social structure.

phenomenal outbreak of female suicides which continued ever afterwards.[5]

Although the Chinese nominally supported the Red sect at the time — there were several monasteries around Li-chiang — they did not suppress native religious practices. Indeed, they were tolerant of religious diversity and encouraged Taoists and others to come to the area. The Chinese were tolerant of any religion that knew its place and did not interfere with government. That is why they were suspicious of the Yellow sect's political ambitions. In other words, the authorities wanted no organized religion that could pose a threat to themselves. Thus, ex-Bön monks were not proscribed unless they tried to organize a church. It was about this time that pictographs came into use.

Before this development, some ex-Bön monks, who were also Na-khi, had started writing down some memorized phrases in the already existing phonetic script. In particular they wrote down *mantras* [the sacred sounds of spells] for banishing evil spirits, and for this purpose the phonetic script was ideal in recording the exact sounds. It was irrelevant that the sounds were meaningless in Na-khi because they represented the original Tibetan sounds and it was this that made them effective, or so it was believed. In any case the major Tibetan sects always conducted their ceremonies in Tibetan, irrespective of whether their audiences understood them.[6] Nevertheless, it is interesting to note that the Black Bön sect did boast that it translated its rituals into the vernacular, although none have come to light.

In a country like China where dialects can vary from village to village, a phonetic script has obvious drawbacks since it is only the transcription of one dialect. Na-khi, similarly, since it is a Tibeto-Burman language is also a tonal and monosyllabic tongue. Its phonetic script employed one sign per word, and although there was little variation in speech patterns it is noticeable that there is little uniformity with regard to phonetic signs, by and large. The Chinese solved their particular problem by using characters which, although pronounced differently, retained a common meaning throughout China. Indeed, the strength of Chinese culture resided precisely in the fact that the written character was constant and was therefore widely understood in space and time. Nevertheless, originally the Chinese written characters were pictographs: little pictures of men, horses, houses and natural phenomena, etc., but they were stylized very early on in their history.

Monosyllabic languages are naturally restricted in the number of possible sounds that can be uttered, let alone used, and hence there tends to be a high proportion of homophones (different words that sound the same). This is still the case even when homophones are tonally distin-

[5] The connection between kinship, suicide and pictographs is discussed in Jackson (1971).
[6] Tibetan religion is well discussed by Stein (1962) and Hoffman (1961).

guished. This implies that unless diacritics are used to signify tones, phonetic scripts are sharply limited in use. No such marks were ever used with the phonetic script of the Na-khi and it had to be restricted to giving well-known phrases.[7] It was not long before the ex-Bön monks decided to adopt the old Chinese system of representing words by pictures, thus obviating the difficulty about homophones and tones. Pictographs had the further advantage when it came to names of gods or men, often five-worded names, that one drawing could represent the person instead of five signs. The purpose of this new writing was not to describe spells nor even to transcribe a ritual text verbatim but to act as an aide-memoire to a ceremony learned by heart. Some of the later rites contain whole lists of gods and spirits that must be chanted in the correct order and the pictographs were drawn of these entities, just in case one lost one's place in the chanting. After all, it is much easier to take one's cue from a picture than from a row of phonetic signs. Thus, like the Chinese characters, Na-khi pictographs could be widely recognized and pronounced despite differences in dialect. The reason for the similarity of pictographic usage among the Na-khi texts is because it is not only a recent development but certain manuscripts were widely copied and imitated.

Na-khi pictographic writing developed in the late seventeenth century when a few ex-Bön monks settled down among the Na-khi as farmers and wished to earn a little pocket money on the side by performing rituals for the banishment of evil spirits. However, at this period they would be in competition with the native ritual specialist, the *ssan-nyi* or *llü-bu,* who was a female shaman skilled in divination and exorcism. No breakthrough was possible until the Chinese intervention had weakened the Na-khi matrilineages and the independence of women; then the men began to monopolize the ritual scene and the female shaman was displaced. The ex-monks became known as *dto-mba* from the Tibetan word for priest (*tön-pä*), but they were still small in numbers and quite unorganized. Their real chance came with the emergence of female suicide as a social problem: the *dto-mbas* capitalized upon this and produced complicated ceremonies that fulfilled the double role of providing large fees while simultaneously encouraging more suicides. The Chinese authorities did not stop the rites, at this stage; they were concerned with enforcing filial obedience. If these ceremonies assuaged the feelings of those families whose daughters were foolish enough to follow the old customs — well, so be it. Gradually the *dto-mbas* took over the important aspects of ritual life, ousted the female shamans by pronouncing that female trances were due to evil spirits while male possession was by the gods. They took care that only their nominees became *llü-bus.* The supremacy of the *dto-mbas*

[7] The neighboring Lo-lo also have a phonetic script, which is used by their ritual specialist, cf. Lin (1961).

occurs in the early nineteenth century when they were called upon to perform on ever conceivable ritual occasion, and this is the time when there was an astronomical increase in Na-khi ritual texts — thousands upon thousands were written. The *dto-mbas* married and trained their sons in this part-time speciality; the rites were elaborated as circumstance or fancy took it. All the same, the Chinese never allowed the *dto-mbas* to set up as a church or sect, and hence, the *dto-mba* ceremonies were restricted to the contingent needs of the villagers. There was no hint of any ethical teaching such as is found in Bön but there is plenty of Bön symbolism in the Na-khi texts. They even have a shaman as their founder, as in Bön, while of course there is no trace of any Buddha.[8] Such then, in outline, is the suggested course of events that led to the texts that are to be analyzed.

A good lead-in to the nature of these *dto-mba* inspired rituals is provided by a close analysis of the construction of the *Szi chung bpö* or Prolongation of Life ceremony. This particular set of fifty-five books, now equally divided between the British Museum and the Commonwealth (formerly, India Office) Library, was written by a well-known *dto-mba* called Ä-dzhi, who also happened to be a *llü-bu* as well, in the winter of 1867. Ä-dzhi was a prolific and methodical writer, whose numerous works can easily be recognized by his trade-mark: two interlinked red circles stamped liberally throughout his books.[9] This particular set was uniformly bound in orange covers, edged with blue, and with the central title-piece flanked by two blue lozenges while on the back cover was given the sequence number of the book.

These sequence numbers, running consecutively from one to seventy-nine, reveal some interesting features. First, it is apparent that the complete set is not in the London collection of fifty-five manuscripts; there are at least twenty-one books missing. Curiously enough, five absent books are in Rock's collection at Marburg, instead, and this brings the total number to sixty. Apparently, Rock had the *Szi chung bpö* ceremony performed for him by the *dto-mbas* using these particular books, but most of the manuscripts were bought up, under his nose, by the British consul.[10] Second, the numbering would be unremarkable, other than showing there was a ritual order, were it not for the fact that the sequence number of the first half of the ceremony has been changed. Luckily, in precisely those books whose sequence number has been altered on the back cover, there is a note on the last page giving the name of the next book to be chanted. However, this annotated sequence is quite different from the

[8] The ethical teaching of Bön is discussed by Snellgrove (1967). Hoffmann (1967) takes up the discussion on Bön symbolism which he had treated earlier in his general history of Bön (1950).

[9] Interestingly enough, Rock obtained many of his Na-khi manuscripts from the son of Ä-dzhi.

[10] The loss of these books piqued Rock as his comments show (1965:xii).

new arrangement. Thus, there are two sequences. The question is why this renumbering was necessary. Third, these changes indicate the books are really interchangeable units within larger ceremonies and can be shuffled around. Most books are simply the texts of single, discrete rites and will be referred to as *subceremonies* since they are often constituent rites of bigger ceremonies. Some of the larger subceremonies are, in fact, written in two or three parts but the title of each book is the same. Every book or subceremony has a title page which gives not only the name of the constituent rite but also, if it is part of a set, the name of the major ceremony it is used in.

A comparison of the initial and final ordering of the books of this ceremony shows the first eighteen books have been redispersed among the first thirty-three books of the final sequence. Since books 34–79 have not been rearranged very much, it would appear that they were numbered after the rearrangement of the first half of the ceremony. It is not to be regarded as a coincidence that it is the first *eighteen* books that are spread out in the first *thirty-three* places because numbers play a significant role in Bön and Na-khi symbolism.[11] Generally speaking, 9 signifies celestial and male things, 7 stands for terrestrial and female things while 5 refers to the points of the compass and 3 means completeness. Because of the Na-khi decimal notation, one finds multiples of 11 or 111 being given to emphasize the above symbolism. However, to complicate this picture there is, in addition, a widespread usage of purely Buddhist numbers: 8, 13, 18, 33, 99, 108, and 360. In the present case, it would appear that the dominant symbolism is Buddhist even though 18 (2×9) and 33 (3×11) can be reconciled with Na-khi symbolism. Nevertheless, it is significant that it is book 18 (old style) which becomes book 33 (new style) while books 19, 27 and 34 remain unchanged. This suggests that certain books have fixed places in the ceremony and the general impression is that the number 9 plays a key role in the ordering process.

The tentative hypothesis was formed that the *Szi chung bpö* consisted of nine sets of nine books, making a total of eighty-one books for the entire ceremony. The initial sequence of the sixty available books was arranged on this basis of nine sets of nine in order to test the hypothesis. This resulted in six sets which were almost complete and three others which were empty except for one book at the head of each set — altogether a promising start considering that a score of books were missing anyway. However, when this procedure was adopted for the renumbered sequence, there was no pattern whatsoever. Evidently something had gone wrong, either with the hypothesis or the numbering system. The trouble centered on a group of four books that had been moved *en bloc* from positions 15–18 to positions 30–33. In effect, this

[11] The role of symbolism in Na-khi ritual is discussed in Jackson (1970).

group had been transferred from set two to set four and hence displaced the remaining books. The solution to the problem of obtaining a meaningful pattern was to expand set four from nine books to thirteen books, after which things fell into place and it explained why the renumbering had been undertaken. The four books that were added to set four were, in fact, the key books dealing with longevity (the purpose of the ceremony) and, moreover, were concerned with the thirteen Swastika goddesses of longevity. In Bön symbolism both the number 13 and the swastika are important in their mythology; so, it was quite appropriate to have a set of thirteen books flanked on either side by three sets of nine books. This left the hypothetical eighth and ninth sets empty, more or less, but then there were the missing books. Thus, either the ceremony consisted of eighty-one (9×9) books in the first instance or eighty-five (8×9+13) books in the second case. If, as seems likely, this version of the *Szi chung bpö* was the former case, then twenty-one books appear to be missing. What happened to these?[12]

The above analysis started with the investigation of the chance finding of an altered sequence. What other evidence is there that the hypothesis of 9×9 sets is feasible? One piece of supporting information comes from the index book of the ceremony. Each major Na-khi rite has a separate index book which accompanies the subceremonies, and this lists the order of chanting the subceremonies besides giving details of the ritual paraphernalia required. There are at least two extant index books to the *Szi chung bpö* ceremony. The first one (Rock 1952) indexes four ceremonies: *Ch'ou gv* (for purification), *Ssu gv* (for the serpent spirits), *Szi chung bpö* (for longevity) and *Muan bpö* (the sacrifice to Heaven) in this order. There are eighty-one subceremonies given for *Szi chung bpö*. The second index book (Rock 1952) also has several ceremonies indexed. Again the *Szi chung bpö* has eighty-one subceremonies but, in addition, so do the preceding two ceremonies taken together, i.e. *Ch'ou gv* and *Ssu gv*. This double set is clearly indicated in precisely 162 neat rubrics for these three ceremonies. It should be pointed out that the rubrics stand for subceremonies and not for books. In fact, there are 127 books mentioned and these are indicated by circles placed at the end of some rubrics. The difference arises because some books contain more than one subceremony. Again, the hypothesis is supported. Indeed, there is also a practical reason for dividing a long ceremony up into sets because one cannot stack eighty-one books in a pile and, in this case, nine sets of nine would be symbolically appropriate.

As a matter of interest, the group of ceremonies mentioned in the index

[12] A brief description of the subceremonies is given in Jackson (1970), where it is concluded that many of the "missing" books were in fact incantations. Because of the substitutability of these ritual books it is likely that the lost books formed a set which could be used in other rituals.

books forms a ritual unit starting with a purification rite, propitiating the serpent spirits who control fertility, protecting the family and ending by praising Heaven. Curiously enough, with the sole exception of the *Szi chung bpö*, the three other ceremonies are the major rites to have been translated by Rock (1948, 1952). While we know Rock had the ceremony performed, he never published anything on it. Hence, it will be useful to briefly mention some details of this ceremony.

Additional supporting evidence for the hypothesis of nine sets comes from examining the opening and closing subceremonies of each set according to the index book.

Table 1.

Opening subceremony	Closing subceremony
1. Open the gates of the gods	Burn incense to the gods
2. The dtv rite to suppress demons	Closing this part of the ceremony
3. The origin of personal sins	To invite the waters of purification
4. The god Ndu rises	The first of the gods is invited
5. The origin of the arrow of Ssu	The gods descend
6. Longevity invited	Invest with the power of *dto-mba* A-mi
7. Fertility invited	Invest with the power of *dto-mba* A-mi
8. The god Ssan-ddo invited	The guardian spirits propitiated
9. Escort the ancestors home	Escort the gods home

Here, each set has a common theme which the first and the last one conclude. The arrow of the Ssu Life God is each family's symbol of longevity and is kept above the hearth. Ssan-ddo is the god of the *llü-bu* and the mountain god of the Li-chiang region; hence, he is the protective god of the Na-khi.

The opening and closing subceremonies of the rearranged *Szi chung bpö* are, however, slightly different (cf. Table 2).

Table 2.

Opening subceremony/book	Closing subceremony/book
1. The origin of the arrow of the Ssu	The erection of the dtv tree
2. Messengers sent to invite the gods	The gods are invited
3. The gods descend	Medicines are offered to the spirits
4. The guardian spirits of the ancestors are invited	*Dto-mba* Shi-lo descends
5. The ancestors are invited	*Dto-mba* Shi-lo descends
6. The uncles of Shi-lo are invited	The power of Shi-lo descends
7. The power of the guardian spirits descends	The guardian spirits are escorted home
8. The dtv tree is escorted	?
9. (The ancestors escorted home)?	The gods are escorted home

While these two versions are far from identical — few Na-khi rites ever are — they have sufficient resemblances to suggest that the ninefold division of the ceremony is the key principle in constructing this rite. Indeed, might it not be the underlying principle for all Na-khi rites? If the nine stages are formalized, they appear thus:

1. the preparation and purification of the place of sacrifice;
2. a general invitation to the deities and spirits to descend to this place;
3. the eviction of demons who might spoil the ceremony;
4. a special invitation to the deities concerned with this particular rite;
5. the sacrifice;
6. a request for power to accomplish the purpose of the ceremony;
7. the suppression of trouble-making demons;
8. the close of the ceremony and removal of the trees used in the ceremony;
9. escorting the deities back home.

The above scheme, developed from the study of the *Szi chung bpö* when applied to all the major Na-khi rites is found to fit in every case and the nine stages are followed rigidly. This pay-off only occurred because the *dto-mba* Ä-dzhi attempted to construct an ideal ceremony with nine subceremonies in each stage and then tried to improve on it by making symbolic correspondences between the thirteen key goddesses and the number of subceremonies in that stage. When one considers the fact that there are only half a dozen ceremonies in the total repertoire of 130 rites which have more than eighty-one subceremonies, it is not surprising that a complete 9 × 9 set of subceremonies is a rare thing. Indeed, most Na-khi ceremonies are very small and only contain two or three subceremonies, hence one gets very few rites that even have one subceremony per stage. The impression left by Rock's translations is quite misleading since he dealt with the medium-sized rites, and these are not typical.

Summarizing the key features of Na-khi ritual in terms of the ninefold sequence (a typical Bön technique), one finds that the central and most important thing is the blood sacrifice. This occurs in the middle of the ceremony (stages 4–6) when the deities who are believed to control the situation which occasioned the rite (e.g. illness, misfortune, etc.) are invited, offered blood and requested to give to the *dto-mba* the power to set things right. Immediately before and after this central section, the demons thought likely to interfere with the success of the ceremony are kept away (stages 3 and 7). The first and last two stages merely open and close the whole rite.[13]

[13] In the rearranged *Szi chung bpö* it was the last two stages which accounted for most of the missing books. As previously argued, these missing books probably formed a set which were borrowed from this rite and used elsewhere. One might note that eighteen such books plus the sixty in our libraries would fill the gap up to the volume 79.

So far, only the arrangement of the subceremonies in the *Szi chung bpö* has been discussed and it would be useful to consider the ceremony in the total ritual context. To the *dto-mbas*, this ceremony ranked second in terms of purity, i.e. they did not consume meat before or during this rite.[14] In fact, it is very similar to the Tibetan rite: *Tshe gzungs* both in title and content for it was performed to protect the living after a death in the family. Thus, this ritual cycle began with a funeral.

The Na-khi funeral rite is called *Zhi mä* (thirty-six subceremonies), and when the dead person is buried it is necessary for the survivors to be protected from dying also — so the *dto-mbas* say. This sequence of rites of protection begins with a performance of *Ch'ou gv* (sixty-two subceremonies) to cleanse the home of pollution. It is followed by *Ssu gv* (eighty-two subceremonies) to propitiate the Ssu serpent spirits who can cause death and illness but who can also give good fortune. Then comes *Szi chung bpö* (ninety-eight subceremonies) and the sequence ends with a small *Muan bpö* (seventeen subceremonies) to worship and thank Heaven. As already mentioned, it is just these ceremonies (except for *Szi chung bpö*) that Rock chose to translate. Is it entirely coincidence? Most likely not, because this group of rites was still being performed. Even so it took Rock 1,500 pages of text and 1,200 footnotes to deal with these four ceremonies, and then only partially: less than half the total of subceremonies known (the figures given in brackets) were in fact translated.[15] No wonder the Na-khi rites seemed so enormous for he had not even tackled the five largest ceremonies which account for half of all the different subceremonies, *viz*. 500 out of the 1,000.

However, Rock was not concerned to account for the Na-khi rites but to translate as many of them as he could, and for this we must be grateful. The aim of this paper, on the other hand, is to show how the rites were constructed. One can begin by noting that in the paradigm case of *Szi*

[14] This evaluation of rites in terms of purity is an implicit acknowledgement of the superior nature of these rites, and this is a Buddhist interpretation. It is all the more curious that the three rites accorded this high status by the Na-khi *dto-mbas* were very similar to certain Tibetan Buddhist rites that had the same purpose. The highest ranking Na-khi rite, on this scale, was *Dta gkügyi bpu* (a substitution rite for unnatural death), next was *Szi chung bpo*, and finally there was *Dto na k'ö* (a scapegoat ceremony for the riddance of slander and evil). This ranking was in inverse proportion to their length: the first had four subceremonies, the second ninety-eight, and the last 132 known subceremonies. It is very possible that the first rite lay at the heart of the rite for suicide, *K'wuo khyü la-llü k'ö*, which the *dto-mbas* expanded into a huge ceremony of some 172 subceremonies. The similar Tibetan rites are mentioned by Ekvall (1964:165) and Waddell (1934:444–448).

[15] These known subceremonies are listed in Rock, 1965. They consist of all recorded subceremonies belonging to different rites but since this includes whatever any *dto-mba* has written, at any time, it does not represent the actual number of subceremonies used in the rite — only the index books give this. Hence the numbers represent the maximum known subceremonies. Thus it could well be that the "missing" books from the Ä-dzhi version of *Szi chung bpö* are somewhere in one of our library collections since ninety-eight subceremonies are listed by Rock and only sixty have been traced.

chung bpö over 40 percent of the subceremonies used there are also employed in other rites. Such a pattern of borrowing is a common feature and the percentage of constituent rites borrowed varies from 40 to 90 percent. Thus, in any large collection of Na-khi manuscripts one will find that a good third of them are just duplicates of other books. Because there are only 1,000 different subceremonies altogether, it follows that the majority of the 10,000 Na-khi manuscripts in our libraries must be simply duplicates. Even our basic subceremonies are not all that common either since many manuscripts are unique productions of particular *dto-mbas* and were rarely widely copied or used. *The essential point is that there is no such thing as a standard Na-khi rite.* Each *dto-mba* made his own selection of subceremonies, according to the pattern elucidated above, and in light of the particular occasion for which the rite was needed, varying the number of subceremonies with the wealth of his client.

The next point is that *the average Na-khi rite is very short* — only a couple of subceremonies long. This becomes clear if one tabulates the percentages of rites with a known maximum number of subceremonies.

Table 3.

	Percentage of rites	Average no. of subceremonies
N=133	53	1
	27	4
	10	14
	7	60
	3	140
	100	

Thus only one-tenth of the ritual repertoire has more than fifteen subceremonies, but, on the other hand, the top 5 percent have more than 100. Such large ceremonies could demand as many as a dozen *dto-mbas* to perform them, and hence, they were expensive and rarely demanded in full. Ceremonies were adjustable in length and one could say that there was a minimum length that could be added to. This sort of elaboration has been mentioned in regard to the funerary rites which could be expanded to include five different ceremonies. Even the plain funeral service, *Zhi mä*, was itself expandable by simply adding on more rites to suit the social status of the deceased — eleven grades were recognized. Similarly, with the profitable suicide ceremony, where fifteen existing and separate rites could be added to the already long basic rite, this elaboration took place depending on the manner of the unnatural death. Hence, both internally and externally, the ceremonies could be expanded — to the limits of anyone's pocket. It is this pattern of accretion that both accounts for

growth of the ritual repertoire and of the larger rites themselves. From small acorns large oaks grow.

Another way of viewing the ritual corpus is to consider the kinds of ceremonies that the *dto-mbas* performed. The commonest rite was simply a prayer asking a demon to go away (30 percent). This was followed by chasing demons (19 percent), sacrifices to demons (12 percent), redeeming the souls of the dead (10 percent), miscellaneous requests (10 percent) and a number of unrelated rites. However, this breakdown does not correspond at all to the number of subceremonies to be found within these main spheres of ritual activity (see Figure 1a,b).

An alternative way of looking at the distribution of rites is to consider them in terms of whether they serve the annual production cycle or the life cycle. The production cycle ceremonies are small both in number and size; they account for only 5 percent of all the subceremonies. On the other hand, the ten largest life cycle ceremonies alone include two-thirds of the subceremonies, and so it is not surprising that the pattern of sharing is greatest among these. The patterns of interrelation between ceremonies are shown schematically in Figure 1c, where the twelve largest rites are given. This diagram not only shows the interdependence of these rites and how they are constructed, but the overall pattern reflects something deeper about the nature of the rites themselves. A comparison with Figure 1d is helpful at this stage.

The last diagram divides the ritual sphere according to the purpose of the major rites but also with regard to the three key agents in Na-khi ritual mythology. The three mythological figures are placed at the apices of a triadic relationship within the ritual sphere and their particular ritual concerns are found by projecting outwards, from their apex onto the circle, the two lines forming the apex. Thus, Ts'o-zä llü-ghügh, the post-flood ancestor of the Na-khi is concerned with Health; Dto-mba Shi-lo, the founding shaman of the *dto-mbas*' rituals, is concerned with Misfortune and Sterility; the Ssu serpent spirits, the lords of the earth, are concerned with Life. The two lines, in each case, cut the circle at two points and these are denoted by numbers which stand for particular rites that the key agent controls. Hence, Ts'o-zä is an important figure in rite 50 (*Khi nv,* the memorial rite for the dead) and in rite 63 (*Szi chung bpö,* the prolongation of life ceremony). Shi-lo figures in rite 97 (*Har-la-llü-k'ö,* for suicides)[16] and in rite 42 (*Shi-lo nv,* a funeral rite for a *dto-mba*). The Ssu are important to rite 36 (*Ch'ou gv,* the purification ceremony) and rite 30 (*Ssu gv,* the propitiation of the Ssu).

Figure 1d also illustrates how any two of these key agents can combine

[16] Strictly speaking, *Har-la-llü k'ö* refers to all the rites connected with unnatural death. Rite 97, the basic ceremony, is entitled *K'wuo khyü la-llü k'ö.* The numbers of the rites are those given by Rock in *Na-khi manuscripts* (1965). A translation of the key myth of suicide is given in Jackson (1973).

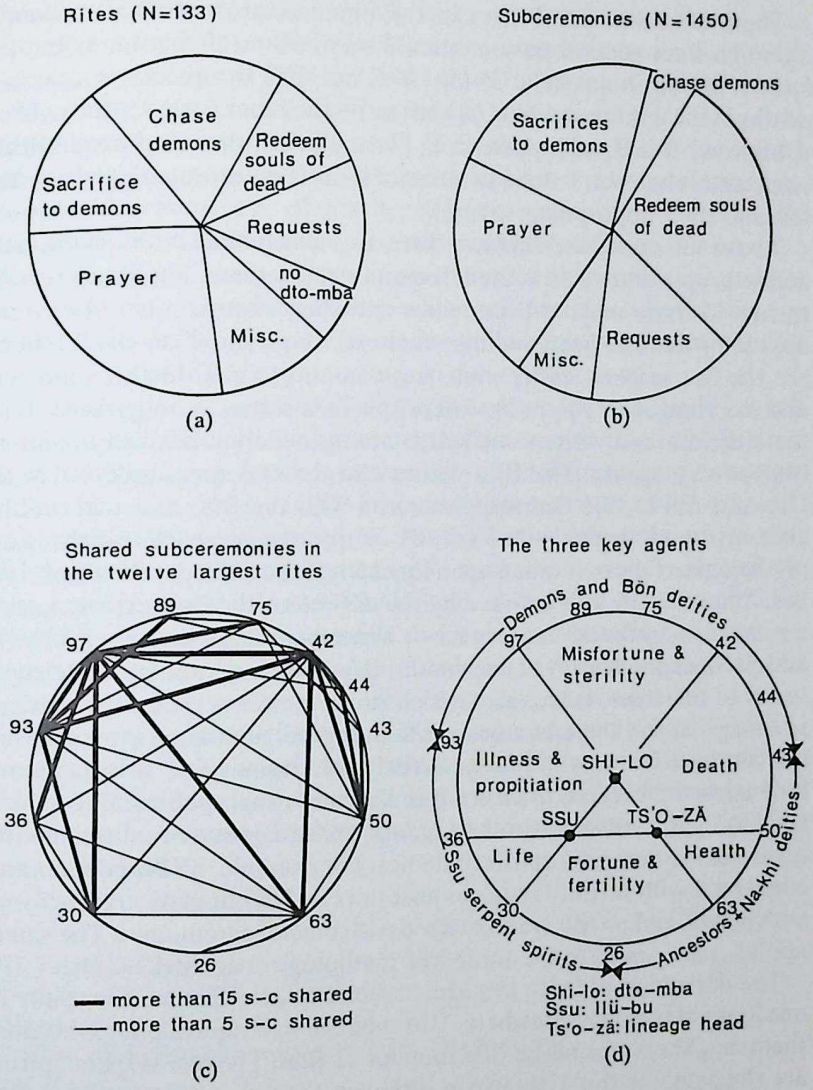

Figure 1.

to share part of the ritual sphere which is diametrically opposed to that of the third agent. Thus, the Ssu and Ts'o-zä are both concerned with Fortune and Fertility (the opposite of Shi-lo's) and the relevant joint ceremony is 26 (*Ssu dsu,* the wedding ceremony). Shi-lo and Ts'o-zä are together concerned with Death (as opposed to the Ssu as Life spirit) and their common rite is 43 (*Zhi mä*, the funeral ceremony). Shi-lo and Ssu are both concerned with Illness and Propitiation (contrasting with Ts'o-zä's concern with Health) and their joint rite is 93 (*Dto na k'ö*, the scapegoat ceremony).

There are some other rites in the figure that should be explained although their general portent should be obvious. Eighty-nine (*O p'er bpö*) is to banish quarrels, 75 (*Shi k'u dter bpö*) is a rite for successive deaths in the family, and 44 (*Gyi mun nv*) is the funeral rite for the wife of a *dto-mba*. It is equally possible to place all the other rites around this circle and, when this is done in terms of shared subceremonies, they also fall into their appropriate sphere.

Above the numbered rites are three arcs which indicate the dominant deities or spirits invoked in the ceremonies below them. Thus from rite 93 to rite 43 there are the Bön deities and spirits which often appear as opposed pairs, one good and the other evil. From rite 93 to rite 26 there are the Ssu serpent spirits while from rite 26 to rite 43 there are the ancestors and deities of the Na-khi people themselves. It is significant that these three arcs of deities and spirits are intimately related to the inner triad of key agents. The Bön deities and demons are connected with Dto-mba Shi-lo, the Ssu serpent spirits with the Ssu, and the Na-khi ancestors and deities with Ts'o-zä. Furthermore, each of the key mythological figures is called upon for aid by three different ritual specialists; Dto-mba Shi-lo is invoked by the *dto-mbas*, the Ssu serpent spirits are called on by the *llü-bus* (especially when these shamans were women), and the lineage ancestor of the Na-khi, Ts'o-zä, is implored by the lineage heads of the clans. Hence there is an isomorphism between the deities, ritual agents and the operators of ritual. Figure 1d attempts to encapsulate all these features within the actual ritual framework. It is meant to look tripartite because there seem to be three ritual spheres. Except for border regions between two key agents, the ritual texts are distinct with regard to the dominant spirits or deities. For example, no Bön deities are concerned with fertility rites, no ancestors or Na-khi gods are involved with illness, and no Ssu are connected with funeral ceremonies. The same applies, *pari passu*, to the three key mythological agents.

The derivation of these key agents seems quite different, especially if one looks at parallels elsewhere. Dto-mba Shi-lo is equivalent to the Bön shaman, gShen-rabs mi-bo, the founder of Bön. The Ssu serpent spirits are the same as the Tibetan *klu* although they also have some of the characteristics of the Chinese dragon. A common feature in Southeast Asia is the connection betwen serpent spirits and shamanesses which accounts for the *llü-bu* as an indigenous ritual practitioner before the *dto-mba* appeared on the scene. Incidentally, the Na-khi deities have nothing whatever to do with the Bön deities, neither has Ts'o-zä.

The thesis that Na-khi ritual derives from ex-Bön monks explains the division of the ritual sphere as outlined above. It accounts for the presence of Bön-like deities and demons and the importance of their founder, Dto-mba Shi-lo. The presence of the *llü-bu* accounts for Ssu spirits but their subordination to the *dto-mbas* introduced the *klu* serpent spirit

element. Elsewhere (Jackson 1969), it is argued that although a Ssu was regarded as the half-brother of Ts'o-zä, there is a strong case for linking the Ssu serpent spirits with the Ssu Life spirit, the chief soul of man.

Generally what is referred to as Na-khi ritual is not the ritual of the Na-khi people as such but the ritual of the *dto-mbas*. These rites, which are written down so carefully in pictographs, are only performed by *dto-mbas* for clients. The clients themselves are passive spectators and do not participate except by their presence for the *dto-mbas* and *llü-bus* take care of the ritual. The only rites in which the Na-khi people take part are the fixed, annual production rites which are conducted by the lineage heads. Here, no *dto-mbas* are needed and this might account for the fact that they do not figure prominently in the written texts.

It is likely that originally, before the *dto-mbas* appeared, Na-khi rituals were divided into only two spheres: production cycle rites and funerals conducted by lineage heads invoking Ts'o-zä; rites concerning illness conducted by female shamans (*llü-bu* actually means "wife of the dragon") propitiating the Ssu serpent spirits. The third ritual sphere was introduced by the ex-Bön monks who called upon their founder Shi-lo to mediate between the people and the Bön demons — demons introduced by the Bön sect when it was dominant in the region, circa 1400.

It has not been possible in this short paper to give all the detailed arguments necessary to support the hypotheses put forward here, nor has there been space to deal with the extensive use of symbolism in the Na-khi *dto-mba* texts.[17] However, its purpose was different. What has been shown is that this ritual has been influenced by Tibetan Bön and an explanation accounting for how and in what manner this took place has been rendered.[18]

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[17] An analysis of the symbolism employed in one myth which throws light upon the traditional kinship system of the Na-khi is discussed in Jackson (1975).

[18] Some of the ideas concerning the diffusion of Bön ideas to China have already been made in Jackson (1972). Most of the aspects discussed here are treated in more detail in my forthcoming book: *Na-khi religion*. Meanwhile, the texts are being analyzed by a computer program that I have worked out for pictographs.

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The Saintly Madman in Tibet

JOHN ARDUSSI and LAWRENCE EPSTEIN

One of the most fascinating characters that runs through the oral and literary traditions of Tibet is a tricksterlike figure that is perpetually engaged in one sort of perverse activity or another — drinking to excess, fornicating, thieving, defying authority, playing magical tricks. In short, this character is a sociopath of the first order, who displays all the behavior that Tibetans purport to disdain. Aside from the obvious humor and ribald good fun the figure engenders, however, there is also a serious side to him. When Tibetans are questioned about the motivation and meanings of these figures, they almost invariably say that they behave the way they do because they are really Buddhas.

Although this may seem to be at variance with what most of us would assume Buddhahood to mean, we hope to demonstrate that this figure, the saintly madman, is a symbol of the Tibetan Tantric and Yogic tradition — a complex assemblage of multiple historical movements and scholastic traditions. His actions resolve a central problem of meaning that involves the disjunct relationship between the ideals of Buddhist theology and the realities of everyday life. Gombrich (1971:321ff.) has characterized this relationship as a tension between the cognitive/life-denying and affective/life-affirming ideals of Buddhism, and much of Tibetan religious and ritual life is directed toward the reduction or transformation of this tension.

The doctrinal presentation of this notion is found in the concept of the Two Truths (*bden-pa gnyis*). The Two Truths are transcendental truth (*don-dam gyi bden*) and relative or phenomenal truth (*kun-rdzob kyi bden*). The distinction is absolutely fundamental to Mādhyamika and thence to Tantric philosophy. Since Mādhyamika teaches that all things

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are essence-less, it follows that there are no differences between phenomena and noumena, subject and object, and so forth. The realization of this subtle but fundamental fact leads one inevitably to salvation. Yet the process of discovery is difficult in the extreme, and according to Tibetan savants, defies all simple explanation. Phenomenal existence and relationships tend to overwhelm us and enmesh us in the karma-generating entanglements of the world, leading us to the deceptive view that phenomena are ultimately real. This gives rise to errors in critical thinking, for, in the Mahāyāna view, phenomenal truth is artificial and compounded (*bcos*) and only absolute truth is real. Ordinary people are unable to see this difference critically and are thus easily confused. Phenomenal truth then arises through the obfuscation (*sgrib-pa*) of one's perceptual powers, occurring when one regards some object or set of relationships between objects and the self, and believes it to be integral, existing in and of itself, and having true significance. The obfuscation continues when the person acts in accordance with that false belief, piling action (and hence karmic result) upon "obscured" perception, thus becoming further enmeshed in his own error.

Second, and perhaps more problematic, is the fact that religiously unsophisticated persons, imperfectly comprehending the doctrine of the Two Truths, then create a radical and false separation between them. Salvation becomes reified as having an ontological status unto itself, something "out there"; thus objectified, salvation becomes a lost cause, and man is committed to spin out his samsaric existence endlessly. A Bon text (Snellgrove 1967:117) states the problem elegantly.

> By force of deluded karmic events, with no
> knowledge and no understanding
> they regard spirit, thought, and mind as three
> separate parts.
> Not understanding the void nature of the non-self,
> the knowledge, which is non-self, they conceive
> as two selves.
> One they assert to be the innate divinity.
> One they assert to be the innate demon.
> Gods are of help to them and demons do harm . . .
> Good and evil, cause and effect, white and black
> are seen,
> and they experience the sufferings of the master
> of death, the Lord of the Dead.
> Thus they conceive of one as many.

Equally important is the role that phenomena and phenomenal truth play in Mādhyamika-Tantric practice. Here, however, the emphasis is clearly on the transformative capacity of the phenomenal world. Whereas the scholastic approach to transcendentalism in Buddhism teaches that

involvement with the world is polluting, sinful, and counterproductive in terms of salvation, in Tantric practice phenomena may serve as vehicles toward salvation, because they are ultimately devoid of meaning. Since man is endowed with Buddha-nature, his activities are logically imbued with the same potentiality, and hence mundane activity performed with an awakened mind is thus transformed into spiritual or salvation activity.

With this background we may now turn to the saintly madman with the purpose of seeing how this strategy works.

To begin with, Tibetans consider certain states of mental abnormality to originate in demonically caused harm (*gdon*). All such states are related to seizure by a specific type of demon. Regardless of whether this seizure is directly or indirectly caused by demonic interference, it results in the imbalance of the humors that control both somatic and mental health. The categories to be briefly discussed are as follows.

1. *Bdud-mo* or *Gson-'dre* [witch]. In folklore witches usually play the role of "bad mother" or "bad wife." In real life, witches tend to be identified as "bad neighbor" or as women playing somewhat marginal roles, such as rich women traders. There is also a related category known as *phra-men-ma*, usually characterized by pious women who spend all their time in prayer and other religious activities, but whose thoughts turn evil and unconsciously harm other people. On the basis of several cases of "real" witches known to our informants, we can state in a preliminary fashion that the category is roughly equivalent to schizophrenia. Alternating with violent and aggressive behavior, the victims are characterized by autistic withdrawal from their environment, loss of speech, and occasional episodes of hyperphagia and coprophagia. In terms of social relations this seems to symbolize two types of antisocial acts, withdrawal from interaction and eating too much of too many horrible things. Witches are always depicted as cannibalistic, and at their gatherings they are supposed to gorge themselves on human and animal corpses.

2. *Bla-'khyer* [soul-loss]. The *bla* is the indigenous "soul" (as opposed to the Buddhist *rnam-shes* [the transmigrating consciousness]. It is the life element that can be lost or stolen by demons, the wandering soul, the vengeful soul, and so on. Typically a person loses it through fright, especially through seeing a demon — such as a witch — in its real form. The loss of the *bla* is characterized by acute depression, the loss of appetite, inertia, and a wasting torpor that may eventually result in the death of the victim. The *bla* can be recalled ceremonially (*bla-' gugs tshe-'gugs*), and its restoration usually means recovery for the victim.

3. *Sems-skyon* [mind-fault]. This category includes what appear to be several forms of both neurosis and psychosis. It is associated by Tibetans with real worry, guilt, and anxieties of various sorts. The cause is attrib-

uted to spirit invasion of the "veins" (*rtsa*), and it is generally cured by tying a blessed thread around the affected part of the body.

4. *Grib-smyo* [pollution madness]. This is characterized by hysterical paralysis and/or chronic illness that can lead to death by causing, among other things, soul-loss. *Grib* is the morbid fear of polluting things, either objects, persons, or encounters with demons.

5. *Rlung-smyo* [wind madness]. Described as *rlung ni sems la phog* [the (humor) wind striking the mind], the victim cries, sings, dances about, and becomes enraged with little or no provocation. His behavior makes him a public nuisance; he is sociopathic and constantly accusing people of being guilty of crimes against his person, accosting them in public, and so on. Interestingly this often takes place in the context of exchange, for the victims are often beggars. Such a victim accused one of these writers of attempting to poison him by giving him food fetched from indoors, instead of some that lay plainly in sight. We should note here that the *rlung-smyon-pa* [madman affected by *rlung*] seems to form a polar contrast with the witch. Whereas the latter is autistic, withdrawn, and hyperphagic, the former is outgoing, bellicose, and afraid of eating (being poisoned). They represent two extremes of socially dysfunctional behavior: both of them are unable to maintain the balanced presentation of self required in the interactions of everyday affairs, and both are unable to cope with food, the principal medium of sociability.

6. *Rtsa-smyo* [vein madness]. A specific form of *rlung-smyo*, it is characterized by nymphomania in women, coprolalia, echolalia, echopraxia, and "jumping madness." It seems very likely that this is the Tibetan version of the same complex of mental disorders commonly found in Northern Asia and around the Pacific Rim: *problokto* among the Siberian Eskimo, *olan* among the Tungus, *wenkeiti* among the Koryak (Czaplicka 1914:309–325); *carmoriel* and *irkunji* among the Yukaghirs (Jochelson 1910:30–38); *menerik* among the Yakuts (Levin and Potapov 1956:269); *bilench* in Mongolia, *latah* in Malaysia, and arctic hysteria in the New World (Aberle 1961). Of these Aberle writes, "It would appear that the *latah* is defending himself in various ways against the fear of being overwhelmed" (Aberle 1961:474) . . . and . . . "the *latah*'s problem is one of disturbance and ambivalence with respect to submissive behavior" (Aberle 1961:475). The Tibetan case would seem to bear out these findings. In our case the madman may be said to become "overwhelmed" by the tensions that attend social interaction and relationships, especially face-to-face (submissive) relationships.

7. *Chos-smyo* [Dharma madness]. This is characterized by the same symptoms given under *rlung-* and *rtsa-smyo*, but it is confined in its use to clergy. It is attributed to the unsuccessful practice of meditation and is said to befall the practitioner who exhibits self-doubt. Any scruple or hesitation (*rnam-rtog*) shown by an unthoroughly trained meditator

leaves him open for demonic attack. Demons, who are threatened by religious activity and who have the ability to read men's minds, regard such activity as dangerous to their own existence, and they are always at the ready to prevent a person from attaining religious or salvation goals. *Chos-smyon-pa* often accost persons both verbally and physically, trying to engage them in debate, and admonishing them for their sins and ignorance of the doctrine: clearly a projective defense mechanism which enables them to cope with their own failures, "by going over to, identifying with the stimulus" (Aberle 1961:474). It is said, however, that *chos-smyon-pa* are clever and especially well trained in debate and logic. This is indeed the case, since they must have been initially at an advanced scholastic stage to have engaged in meditative practices at all. This form of madness was recognized historically at an early date in Tibet. The canonical commentaries, the *Bstan-' gyur*, contain a section on the removal of harmful demons. One text (Ye-shes-rdo-rje n.d.) gives the following characteristics: singing, playing, dancing, wailing, bellicosity, insomnia. This is said to be caused by an excess of the humors: "Loud and excessive speech are the products of phlegm," and so forth. Standard cures, involving drugs, offerings, and diet are prescribed at astrologically correct times.

The words *smyo-ba* [madness] and *smyon-pa* [madman] have several other connotations which we should briefly examine before we turn to the saintly madman. They may apply to animals, as in *khyi-smyon* [mad dog] or to animal rage. They also designate in a loose sense someone who is similarly furious or enraged, or a person who openly courts disaster by doing stupid things, such as defying sacred tradition, demons, or local spirits, or performing proscribed tasks on astrologically bad days. The verb *myos-pa*, a cognate of the nouns discussed above, designates derangement of the senses, whether it be through liquor, drugs, or one of the physical senses, e.g., "maddened with thirst." Wine or beer is referred to in many texts as *smyo-chu* [water which maddens], whose use dulls the senses, turns one belligerent, removes one's sense of morality, and so on (Dpal-sprul 1971).

8. *Bla-ma smyon-pa* [saintly madman]. The mad saint is a figure of some importance in Tibetan popular religious literature. Although the three best known saintly madmen — Dbus-smyon, Gtsang-smyon, and 'Brug-smyon — date from approximately the sixteenth century, their poetry and stories are still being told today. Other figures, from both earlier and later times, are also referred to as being mad, including the poet-yogin Mi-la-ras-pa and Thang-stong-rgyal-po, the "patron saint" of Tibetan opera.

The behavior of the saintly madman is similar to that of the mad individuals (*smyon-pa*) we have already described. What distinguishes the former from the latter from the pathological point of view is that the

saintly madman seems to be in full possession of his mental faculties. In fact, the popular conception holds him to be a holy man — a saint — far superior in intellect, meditative skill, and learning to his monastic or otherwise orthodox peers — in short, a Buddha.

The principal attributes of the saintly madman are:

a. A generalized rejection of customary behavior which society-at-large, and the monastic establishment in particular, regard as appropriate for the religious man. Although several of the mad saints did take monastic vows early in their careers, they seldom lived the life of the typical monastery-bound monk. Instead they lived the life of the wandering yogi or arhant, wearing rags, and, in general, they tended to blend their activities with those of worldly men. This is so, because life in a large monastery is highly complex, requiring considerable obligations and participation in communal chores. Even though the saintly madmen might justify their contrary behavior by saying that the ordinary Vinaya rules did not apply to them, their activities could still prove detrimental to the establishment as a whole, by encouraging the other ordinary monks to take their religious vows less seriously. As this could jeopardize their chances for salvation, the saintly madman would be hurting his stated purpose of working for the salvation of all sentient beings. Such an event occurred in the youth of Gtsang-smyon Heruka, for example, and led to his leaving the monastery for a life of pilgrimage and meditation. In the process of acting out the content of a religious vision, he offended the high monks and lay patrons of his monastery and was forced to leave (Chandra 1969: f.14b).

b. An inclination toward bizarre modes of dress. 'Brug-pa Kun-legs ('Brug-smyon) was often questioned by ordinary monks about his clothing. The second volume of his biography contains a hilariously exaggerated description of his own dress, as well as that of Gtsang-smyon and Dbus-smyon ('Brug-smyon n.d.:ff. 2b, 3b). The method in this madness is revealed in the biography of Thang-stong-rgyal-po, also known as Lung-stong-smyon-pa, who was found one day sitting on a circumambulation path covered by a seedy old blanket. When some monks made some disparaging remarks about this, he proceeded to tell them about the symbolic esoteric meaning of each seam and patch, a mandala constructed not in the usual highly ritualized manner, but with the mundane elements of a common thing ('Gyur-med-bde-chen n.d.: f.101).

c. A disregard for the niceties of interpersonal behavior, particularly with regard to social status, modes of address, deferential behavior, and so forth. Often this would appear as rather childish mockery, but it had great appeal for the common man for whom it was intended. 'Brug-pa Kun-legs was particularly invidious in his comments on high teachers and monks. Once he was staying at an inn when a famous prophet (*gter-ston*)

rode up on horseback. Disgusted by the spectacle everyone was making over him, 'Brug-pa Kun-legs sang a bawdy and sarcastic song, which concluded with the phrases

Whenever tasty beer is served, even the highest of
ordained monks will drink it in secret.
When the serving girl approaches, even the highest
lama will glance intently beneath her dress ('Brug-smyon n.d.:f. 60a).

To the protest that people would accuse him of being mad, 'Brug-pa Kun-legs replied that he cared not for what others would think, that they always found fault with other people without being able to see their own aberrations ('Brug-smyon n.d.:f. 57b).

d. A professed disdain for scholasticism, the study of religion through books alone. The saintly madman preached that the best instruction was not to be gained from studying books, or even from one's *guru*, but rather from one's self, or any other phenomenal appearance. 'Brug-pa Kun-legs wrote, "Who or whatever appears becomes my fundamental teacher" ('Brug-smyon n.d.:f. 6a). In a similar vein, Mi-la-ras-pa once said:

Once one understands all appearances as one's book, Time passes and one forgets black-lettered books. In fact, it is proper to forget their burdensome teachings (Gtsang-smyon n.d.:f. 265).

e. The use of popular poetical forms, mime, songs, epic tales, and so forth, during the course of their preaching. There is little doubt that this characteristic of the mad saint sprang from the desire to involve the ordinary man in salvation activity, causing him to awaken to the Buddha's message. Thang-stong-rgyal-po's invention of the Tibetan opera (*a-lce lha-mo*), brilliant spectacles and pageants which remain the most popular art form in Tibet, was probably based on this notion.

f. The use of obscenity and vulgar parlance. Partially meant to further demonstrate their public disrespect for conventional morality, the use of profanity was no doubt calculated to jolt the self-righteous hypocrisy of the religious establishment. The key words in the saintly madman's teachings were "naturalness" (*rang-byung*) and "spontaneity" (*shugs-byung*). It is in this connection that Mi-la-ras-pa's expressed lack of shame over his nakedness must be understood.

Well, my fine young fellow,
You find shame where there is no shame.
This penis of mine is a natural thing,
I know nothing of such artificial shame (Gtsang-smyon n.d.:f. 83a).

Obscenity was also meant to convey Tantric messages as well. According to an oral version of a 'Brug-pa Kun-legs story, one day 'Brug-smyon arrives at the house of a well-off farmer, and requests board and room for

the night. The farmer consents and goes off about his business, only to return to find the mad saint and the farmer's wife in a compromising position. Reaching for his sword, he attacks 'Brug-pa Kun-legs, who takes hold of the sword and ties the blade into a knot. The farmer then recognizes him as a holy man, and invites him to stay there as long as he likes, saying he intends to build a chapel dedicated to Tārā, where he can reside. 'Brug-pa Kun-legs consents to this plan and tells him, "You like religion and I like cunt. May both of us be happy!" According to monk informants, the bawdry refers to Tantric practice of ("sexual") union in meditation with one's tutelary's female coadept (*mkha'-'gro-ma*), and that "happiness" in this context signifies the bliss of enlightenment. We should also note incidentally that it is in the figure of the *mkha'-'gro-ma* that we find the homologous counterpart of the witch. These supernaturals often appear as creatures of hideous demeanor and appearance. Not a few hagiographical recountings of the lives of the saints (*rnam-thar*) describe encounters with these figures, who at first threaten to kill or dismember the adept, and then eventually reveal themselves as his divine assistants; death and dismemberment are, of course, moments of supreme achievement in both certain shamanistic and Tantric practices.

It should be obvious that the saintly madman shares a number of behavioral characteristics that we have described for the categories beginning with *rlung-smyo*. He is sociopathic, extroverted, aggressive, argumentative, and engages in debate, singing, dancing, and so on. Although this range of "mad" activity characterizes the reverse of normative social behavior, in the case of the truly mad it is pathological and involuntary; whereas for the mad saint, it constitutes a strategy which is actively embraced and goal-directed. This cultural idea is further reinforced by the popular notion that madness is sometimes indicative of saintliness. Goldstein (1964) found, for instance, that *ldab-ldob*, the so-called soldier monks who engage in internecine monastic fighting, homosexual acts etc., actually mature into exemplary monks in many cases. In a different vein, Miller (this volume) recorded responses to TAT pictures shown to Tibetan refugees in India. One sketch, depicting an "encounter between a monk and a hippie . . . produced unexpected responses." The hippie, despite his disheveled and beggarly appearance, was treated in a manner not inconsistent with how a madman might be viewed. A typical response was that one should not judge a book by its cover, or that the hippie might have a good heart (mind) despite his appearance.

The aim of the mad saint is consistent with the ideals of Mahāyāna, i.e., to work for the salvation of all sentient beings. His methodology, however, is radical. He takes literally the description given in the *Hevajra Tantra*:

> Just as a man who suffers with flatulence is given beans to eat, so that wind may overcome wind in the way of a homeopathic cure, so existence is purified by existence in the countering of discursive thought by its own kind. . . . Just as those who have been burned by fire must suffer again by fire, so those who have been burned by the fire of passion must suffer the fire of passion. Those things by which men of evil conduct are bound, others turn into means and gain thereby release from the bonds of existence. By passion the world is bound, by passion too it is released, but by the heretical buddhists this practice of reversals is not known (Snellgrove 1959:vol. 1: 93).

The reversal of normative behavior explains the paradox of the madman's actions; egocentrism fights egocentrism, his vulgarity fights the vulgarity of the world. The revolutionary aspect of the madman ideal places him in opposition to a number of things. The comfortable and easy pace of traditional scholasticism and monastic life he views as an impediment to salvation and freedom. Likewise, for him the norms that govern relationships between ego and alter, high and low, are like fetters that bind "naturalness" and "spontaneity," a style of action which is not unlike that of the truly insane, who are, by that fact, exempt from punishment for their infringements of Tibetan secular law. His madness, in the popular mind, is the proof of his success, and his misconduct is beyond judgment; he serves the masses as living proof of the Mahāyāna thesis that the liberated man is outside the laws of karma. Having already achieved enlightenment, he is just an appearance, an embodied illusion like everything else in this world. What he does is only relative to what is really real.

In the Tantric worldview, human behavior, both psychological and physiological, has a naturally declining or downward impetus. *Viparītabhāvanā* (Tib. *bzlog-pa'i sgom-pa*, literally "meditation which reverses"), on the other hand, has a "regressive" or inherently "reverse" nature, writes Dasgupta,

> . . . firstly in the sense that it involves yogic processes which give a regressive or upward motion to the whole biological as well as psychological systems which in their ordinary nature possess a downward tendency, and secondly, in the sense that such yogic practices lead the Siddha to his original, ultimate nature as the immortal *Being* in his perfect or divine body, back from the ordinary process of becoming (Dasgupta 1969:229–230).

To this statement it could be added that the practitioner makes use of those forms of behavior which are polluting or otherwise ritually proscribed, because they have the appearance or form (but not the reality) of being polluting. By behaving in a manner contrary to social norms, the saintly madman attempts to reach a perfect understanding of the Mādhyamika thesis that there is no distinction between good and bad, that everything has a "uniformity of flavor" (*ro-snyoms*).

In the passage from the authoritative *Hevajra Tantra* which we quoted

above, what Snellgrove has translated as "homeopathic cure" is rendered by the Tibetan translator as "the application of the medicine of reversal" (*bzlog-pa'i sman ni brtags-pa*). A medicine reverses the normal course of an illness while it enhances the normal course of life. So also does reverse behavior halt the downward trend of human existence, even as it provides upward impetus towards the state of final salvation. Similarly, the conventional rules of social behavior, which funtion to insure the smooth operation of the moral order, are also a moral illness. What the mad saint demonstrates is that these conventional rules not only bind us to the world, they also perpetuate our spiritual problems. He demonstrates this by using his naturalness and spontaneity to slash away at the rules of interaction and the hypocrisies which they engender — excessive, insincere deference, politeness, and humility. The following example neatly demonstrates what we have in mind. Once on the occasion of a New Year's ceremony, 'Brug-pa Kun-legs came to the hall of the Second Dalai Lama, Dge-'dun-rgya-mtsho. An aged and revered aide to His Holiness asked 'Brug-pa Kun-legs to sing a song for the occasion to the collected assembly of monks. This audacious song in some ways parallels the opening lines of certain Mahāyāna sutras, where the Buddha makes a statement that proves offensive to some group, whereupon they get up and leave. A second statement offends certain others, and they leave also. In this way the vast majority of the listeners depart, leaving only those individuals truly desirous of hearing the truth. In this way the song of 'Brug-pa Kun-legs consists of a series of verses, each condemning a certain type of individual or behavior, and each ending with the injunction that this or that type of individual should "get on out of here." Of course no one leaves, though the song becomes progressively more vulgar. In one verse, 'Brug-pa Kun-legs condemns nuns as whores and murderers of their own illegitimate children, telling them to "get on out of here." In another he condemns wretched horses that are always falling into holes and throwing their riders, embarrassing them in public. It is left to the imagination of the audience just to whom he is referring. In the course of the song virtually everything and everyone is condemned for some form of evil deed or hypocrisy. At the end even His Holiness snickers a little, and the audience politely tells 'Brug-pa Kun-legs how true and correct his words are. At this climactic point 'Brug-pa Kun-legs, the madman and religious radical, says, "But this song does not at all comprehend the real truth, and I myself am an old bag of lies!" We are tempted to see in this episode what Søren Kierkegaard once defined as the underlying principle of his life as a writer, "to beguile a person into the truth." It is precisely this "Kierkegaardian reversal," as Joseph Pieper (1964:39) has called it, that 'Brug-pa Kun-legs employs. Pleased by the good humor and truth of the song, the audience is suddenly informed that it is all wrong, that the author is a liar. The real message of 'Brug-pa

Kun-legs is that from the point of view of the absolute truth, none of what he says is true. And that, from the relative point of view, makes him a liar. He has beguiled them to view reality from a point of view which they had become accustomed to ignore in practice.

The saintly madman is a key figure in Tibetan Buddhism, and a primary example of how the synthesis of two historically and philosophically distinct traditions has come about. On one hand, his madness fits perfectly the model introduced by the Indic tradition. Figures such as the eighty-four Siddhas were madmen also, a fact which earned Tantric practitioners a bad reputation among the orthodox religious circles of India. Saintly madness was not confined to Buddhist circles alone, for there are also Hindu traditions which note that the perfected *sanyassin* should behave like an idiot. (Although it would take us too far afield in the present context to demonstrate it, we would also maintain that all the world religions have had their "mad" saints.) On the other hand, the form of madness adopted by the Tibetan mad saint may be viewed equally and legitimately as historically unconnected with the Indic tradition. We have attempted to show that this pattern of madness was indigenous to Tibet. In fact the symptoms we describe for *smyo-ba* are generalized throughout Inner and Northern Asia, the Pacific Rim and North America. The Tibetan mad saint has somehow synthesized these diverse historical traditions, but in a manner in which this synthesis of cultures merges with the most abstract, yet basic, ideas of Tibetan philosophy and worldview.

In doing so he also shows us that the duality which binds us is a product of out own unrealized nature; and that the dichotomy depicted in Buddhist theory — conventionally understood as noumenal truth/relative truth, and in the popular tradition as the life-affirming attachments to the world/the life-denying withdrawal from the world — is a false opposition. By identifying phenomenal appearance with noumenal goal, behavior with mentition and intention, and the postulated laws of moral causation with intuitive method, he thus overcomes a counterproductive polarity which would otherwise work against his purposeful pursuit of salvation for all beings.

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Trans-Himalayan Traders in Transition

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All along Nepal's northern border there are regions of high altitude where agriculture and animal husbandry alone cannot sustain even a relatively sparse population. However, the inhabitants' position in the interstices of two complementary economic zones has enabled them to assume the profitable role of intermediaries in the exchange of the products of the arid Tibetan plateaus for those of the relatively low lying middle ranges of Nepal. The barter of grain and other agricultural products of that region for Tibetan salt and wool formed for centuries, possibly millennia, the basis of a trade which has traditionally been in the hands of various, mostly Tibetan-speaking communities inhabiting the high valleys immediately south of the Nepal-Tibet border. Apart from being the natural channels for the exchange of these basic local products, the passes across the Great Himalayan Range served also the flow of trade from the more distant lands of India and China.

The high altitude dwellers of the Nepal Himalayas reacted to the available commercial openings in a variety of ways. There were communities such as the Lhomis of the Upper Arun Valley who confined their trading activities to a very limited barter of local produce for commodities destined for their own use and that of their immediate neighbors. But such minimal response to the opportunities inherent in the position on one of the routes to Tibet is exceptional, and many communities such as the Bhotias of Walongchung, the Sherpas of Namche Bazar, the Takhalis of Tukche, the Taralis of Tichurong, and the Bhotias of Mugu developed trade as their central economic interest while the people of Humla pursued it as an occupation intimately intertwined with their pastoral activities. Involvement in long-distance trade has determined the life style of individuals and whole communities, and it is obvious that any

sudden change in the scope for such trade must have a profound effect on an economic system built up over generations.

Such a change has been brought about by two events, which although initially unconnected, had a combined effect on the economy of the border populations. The one event is the renewed assertion of Chinese authority over Tibet and the subsequent restrictions on traffic of men, animals, and goods across its borders. The other is the improvement of internal communications in Nepal, which is opening the middle ranges to imports of cheap Indian salt, thereby destroying the market for Tibetan salt. In this paper I shall outline the effect of these developments on the trading communities of three of the border regions which I studied at various times during the years 1953–1972. They are the Sherpas of Khumbu, the Thakalis of Thak Khola, and the Bhotias of Humla.

SHERPAS OF KHUMBU

As long as the Sherpas' trade with Tibet was unhampered by political restrictions it had enabled them to attain a standard of living far above that of many other Nepalese hill people, and in particular that of their southern neighbors, the purely agricultural Rais. It was the trade with Tibet that gave the Sherpas the chance of acquiring valuable jewelry, clothing, household goods, and ritual objects of Tibetan and Chinese origin, while the many journeys connected with this trade kept them in touch with the aesthetic and religious interests of their Tibetan neighbors.

In a discussion of Sherpa trade as it existed until the closing of the Tibetan border in 1959, one has to distinguish between the big merchants who had developed trading as their primary occupation and the men who devoted most of their time to farming, undertaking only two or three trading trips a year. For the latter trading was principally a means of securing by barter commodities for their own consumption, though they always expected to make some profit by the resale of part of their purchases.

On a different level lay the trading operations of the big merchants who derived most of their income from commerce. Most of the transactions of such merchants involved payment in money or were at least calculated in money. Some of the richer merchants owned houses in Tibet and spent part of the year there. Their trade contacts reached as far as Shigatse, Kalimpong, and Calcutta, while their business connections with Kathmandu were on the whole slight.

The trade of the big merchants of Khumbu required an elaborate organization, long-standing personal contacts in Tibet and India, and great enterprise. Many trade deals involved long-term credit, and personal prestige and trustworthiness were often the only security offered. A

system of ceremonial friends was designed to provide the traders with reliable business partners in distant areas, and even minor traders used to conclude such friendship pacts with Tibetans no less than with Rais or members of other Nepalese communities.

At least two-thirds of the population of Namche Bazar lived almost exclusively on income from trade; in other villages too there were men who devoted the greater part of their energy to commerce. The disruption of the traditional trade relations between Sherpas and the Tibetans of the adjoining Tingri District by the Chinese authorities was hence a severe blow to large sections of the Sherpa community. Not only did it deprive professional traders of their livelihood, but it had also an adverse effect on the traditional crafts of Khumbu. As long as Tibetan wool was imported in substantial quantities, weaving flourished, and the Sherpas produced a variety of woolen cloth for their own use as well as for sale in other parts of Nepal. Today one rarely sees women weaving; the Sherpas themselves are desperately short of warm woolen cloth and have none left for sale.

How did the Sherpas fill the economic gap created by the virtual destruction of their trading links with Tibet? Fortunately for the people of Khumbu a new source of income had arisen even before Tibet fell into the Chinese grip. As high altitude dwellers, the Sherpas used to carry heavy loads of trade goods across snow-covered passes and proved invaluable as porters in the service of foreign mountaineering expeditions. During the past decade there has been a rapid development of tourism. Previously only organized expeditions and a few scholars ventured into the remoter mountain regions of Nepal, but more recently trekking has become a sport that attracts increasing numbers of tourists. Being experienced in work with foreigners and used to long-distance travel, the Sherpas proved excellent guides and camp servants. Today they are employed not only for tours to the Sherpa country, but also for trekking in Western Nepal.

The rates of pay commanded by Sherpas employed by mountaineers and tourists are high by Nepalese standards, and their employment is now well organized. In most villages of Khumbu about 70 percent of the households contain at least one member regularly engaged in work connected with mountaineering and tourism. Some of the young men spend as much as eight or nine months of the year away from their village. The fact that nowadays many Sherpas are employed in trekking work in Western Nepal makes it impossible for them to return home between periods of employment, and some of them have secondary establishments in Kathmandu.

Apart from the cash earnings of Sherpas employed by mountaineers and trekkers, the economy of Khumbu benefits also from the payments made by tourists for supplies and accommodation when they stay in Sherpa villages. This influx of cash and the resulting monetization of the

Sherpa economy finds expression in the operation of a weekly market at Namche Bazar. This market is now a well-established institution, and it is estimated that the usual turnover on a market day is Rs. 12,000–15,000. An average of 200–400 people from the regions south of the Sherpa country bring their wares to Namche Bazar, and Sherpas from all the villages of Khumbu gather to make their purchases. Most of the sellers, who come from distances of three to six days' journey, are Rais, and rice, maize, and millet are their main wares. The Rai traders from the middle ranges sell all their wares for cash and do not buy anything from the Sherpas. The era of barter has clearly come to an end and so has buying on credit. Previously cultivators from the middle ranges came to Namche Bazar and exchanged grain for Tibetan salt. The Namche merchants stored the grain, and then sold it to Sherpas from other villages, often on credit. Nowadays only people with ready money go to the weekly market and buy grain for cash. Wealthy Sherpas purchase in the weekly market rice and other grain on speculation and store it in their houses. When the price has risen, they sell the grain to other Sherpas, sometimes making a profit of 33 percent within less than half a year.

While some of the old established traders of Namche Bazar engage in such transactions, buying and selling grain is no substitute for the large-scale Tibetan trade which was the mainstay of their business. They had therefore to look for new sources of income. Some of them found these in providing facilities for tourists, while others developed trade with the Kathmandu Valley. Contact with the outside world and particularly foreigners has given the Sherpas a taste for commodities, such as sugar, biscuits, Indian tea, soap, electric torches, canvas shoes, and a variety of clothing. Because woolen materials are now in short supply, there is a growing demand for cotton textiles, and some of the Namche traders have begun to bring such goods from Kathmandu. Thus the north-south axis of the traditional trade has partly been replaced by a flow of trade along a route running roughly from east to west.

The partial transformation of the economy of Khumbu has had considerable repercussions on the social life of the Sherpas. Two phenomena are immediately apparent: the composition of village society has become unbalanced because of the absence of a large percentage of the young men during the greater part of the year; economic power has shifted from the older men of long-established Sherpa families to young and middle-aged men who are not necessarily of families enjoying inherited high status.

Sherpa villages used to be characterized by their unity of purpose and the absence of factionalism. The interests of the villagers were seldom in conflict, and disputes between individuals could usually be settled by mediation. The village was the focal point of the aspirations of all inhabitants, and economic advancement and the build-up of prestige was con-

sidered in the terms of a man's position within the village community. Now, however, the focus of many Sherpas' interests has shifted to the economic possibilities provided by tourism, and success in this sphere and in business enterprises located in Kathmandu offers an alternative to the acquisition of influence in local affairs. There also are indications that Sherpa villages are no longer always united in their reaction to events and prepositions originating outside the confines of Sherpa society. This became obvious when a Japanese group began building a hotel on a site considered to be part of the village land of Khumjung. The employment provided by the project was of obvious advantage to the villagers, but there was resentment about the destruction of forest involved in the scheme. In the assessment of the balance of advantages and disadvantages of the hotel project, the village split, and individuals took up positions according to the personal benefits they could expect from the new enterprise. There is an obvious conflict between the interests of the older men with considerable holdings of land and herds of yak, who depend for their farming on hired labor, and younger men, who see their future in the development of tourism and want to sell their labor at the highest possible rate in the new market created by the demands of mountaineers and trekkers.

Considerable changes have taken place also in the intellectual and spiritual life of the Sherpas. Traditionally all cultural activities occurred within the framework of Tibetan Buddhism. Monasteries were the intellectual centers and lamas provided education both for those preparing for a religious life and for those intent only on acquiring the ability to read and write for practical and ritual purposes. When I visited Khumbu in 1953 and 1957 the monasteries of Tengboche and Thami were thriving institutions, and the number of novices seemed to augur well for their future development. In 1971, however, the scene had changed. The majority of the Sherpas were undoubtedly still firm believers in the Buddhist doctrine and there was no sign of the appearance of any rival ideology. But the practical interest in religious institutions and performances had noticeably diminished. Recruitment to monastic communities had dramatically fallen, and many of the monks of such monasteries as Tengboche had left to return to secular life. While in the past Sherpas gave rich donations to religious institutions, the present generation is much less generous. Most of the cash is now in the hands of young men who have relatively little interest in religion. Yet, Buddhism remains the accepted ideology and respect is paid to such symbols as reincarnate lamas, notwithstanding the fact that many different interests compete for the attention and the resources of the younger members of the community. Though Sherpas have recently had increasing contact with Hindu populations, there is no indication that Hinduism has had any impact on their beliefs or social attitudes.

The situation in which the Sherpas find themselves today does not conform to the usual pattern of the integration of ethnic minorities into larger economic and political systems. The termination of their traditional contacts with Tibet through political events outside their control has forced them to reorient their economy and to seek new sources of income. But unlike many other communities in similar situations, such as some of the tribal minorities of India, they were able to avoid entering into a relationship of dependence with a numerically and politically superior population. They have not had to link their economy with that of any of the dominant castes of Nepal, but have developed their role in the tourist industry of Nepal in the spirit of potential entrepreneurs and not in that of laborers seeking work outside their own homeland. The relatively high wages Sherpas can command reflect their status as professionals, and their ability to earn such wages facilitates the accumulation of capital which they are prepared to invest in trade and in the creation of tourist facilities in their own villages. Thus, the decline of the trade with Tibet has not led to any despondency or loss of initiative, but has stimulated the Sherpas to enter a new field of enterprise, a field to which they brought all the skill and spirit of adventure they had developed as independent traders.

THAKALIS OF THE DHAULAGIRI ZONE

My second example of a Himalayan trading community involved in a process of economic change are the Thakalis of the Kali Gandaki Valley. Unlike the Sherpas the Thakalis are not of Tibetan stock, but are more closely akin to such tribes as Magars, Tamangs, and Gurungs. Their position on one of the important trade routes across the Himalayas exposed them for many centuries to strong Tibetan cultural influence and afforded them the possibility of building up a dominant role in the important salt trade. In the second half of the nineteenth and first decades of the twentieth century, prominent Thakalis obtained customs contracts from the Nepalese government. These gave them control over the import of salt and led to the accumulation of great fortunes in the hands of men who held also the administrative office of district magistrate (*subba*). The trade of Thak Khola and the adjoining regions began to dwindle when after 1959 the Chinese authorities restricted the type of goods to be exported from Tibet, a policy which caused a shift of the business from big merchants to smaller operators, many of whom were not Thakalis. The property of the Thakalis, which was unequaled by that of any other ethnic group in comparable regions of Nepal, derived mainly from their skill and success as traders. While there have always been a good many Thakalis who depended for their subsistence on agriculture and spent most of their

energy on the tillage of their land, such farmers could never have created the wealth on which the highly civilized style of living of the great merchant families of Tukche was based. This style becomes apparent as soon as one enters their houses. This style impressed Giuseppe Tucci so much that he referred to them as "palaces." They are of a size, architectural standard, and quality of interior decoration most uncommon in the hills of Nepal and surpassed only by the houses of some of the rich Sherpa traders of Solu.

The opportunity for trade which brought great wealth to some and a generally high standard to the majority of the Thakalis of Thaksatsae derives from the geographical position of their habitat. Thaksatsae lies on one of the easiest routes leading from Tibet across Nepal to the plains of Northern India. The passes between Lo and Tibet are comparatively low and easily negotiable for pack animals of all types, and the route running south to Pokhara and the Terai bypasses narrow gorges such as elsewhere impede the use of beasts of burden. Thaksatsae, moreover, lies at a point of this route most favorable for the establishment of an entrepôt trade. As far as Thaksatsae, situated at an average altitude of 7,800 feet, Tibetans from across the international frontier as well as Bhotias from Lo and Dolpo can come with their caravans of yak and cross-breeds (*dzo*) without exposing themselves and their animals to the unaccustomed heat of the lower regions, while except during two or three winter months the climate and height of the area do not create any hardship for the thinly clad folk from the middle ranges of Nepal. Thaksatsae is thus the obvious point for an exchange of goods from the north for those of southern regions, as well as the shifting of merchandise from one means of transport to the other. The respective climates of the Tibetan highland and the lower regions of Nepal are, moreover, so constituted that the arrival of the goods from both directions cannot always be coordinated. The tracks from Thaksatsae toward the south become impassable for pack animals and difficult for porters during the monsoon months, whereas just at that time travel through the arid valleys of Lo and across the passes to Dolpo and Tibet is easy and comparatively comfortable. Conversely, the winter months are unsuitable for journeys to Tibet or Dolpo, while at that time travelers through the lower Kali Gandaki Valley find their progress unimpeded by swollen streams and sodden paths. Hence, there is a natural need for the storage of goods somewhere at the border of the two geographical and climatic zones. The Thakalis have made use of this need to establish themselves as middlemen who purchase and, if necessary store, the merchandise reaching their area from north and south.

Even before political events in Tibet had disrupted trade with Nepal, there occurred a decrease in the Thakalis' share in the border trade. Prosperity and success, developed during the years of their monopoly on the salt trade, freed the wealthier among the Thakalis from the necessity

to travel themselves to Tibet. While they continued to act as middlemen, the movement of goods between Thaksatsae and Tibet largely fell into the hands of the hardier people of Lo and Baragaon.

The considerable capital accumulated by Thakali merchants enabled them, however, to engage in profitable trade deals even without braving the risks and discomforts of long journeys on foot and horseback. Based in their houses in Thaksatsae they dealt in a variety of commodities from grain and salt to cloth and cigarettes. In 1962 I found that quite apart from the big merchants of the *subba* family there were men of medium wealth whose business had an annual turnover of between Rs. 25,000 and 50,000. In the village of Kobang there was an open shop with an annual turnover of Rs. 25,000 and a trader in Narchung, who kept a shop and dealt also in horses, reckoned with a turnover of up to Rs. 30,000. Men who went to Kalimpong and other places in India to purchase goods for sale in Thak Khola expected to make a profit of about Rs. 4,000 on the sale of goods bought for Rs. 15,000.

Though the respective roles of the various agents in the trade along the Kali Gandaki have changed from time to time, its basic pattern has largely remained the same.

The two commodities, the exchange of which has always been the mainstay of the trade along the Kali Gandaki route, as well as in many other areas on the Nepal-Tibet border, are salt and grain. Salt, collected from salt lakes of Tibet, was exchanged for grain grown mainly in the lower regions of Nepal. This barter-trade involved usually several phases, each handled by a separate agent. Petty traders of Dolpo and Lo traveled with yak, cross-breeds, or pack-goats and sheep, laden with grain, to villages in the border area of Tibet, such as Mango-tsora, six to seven days' journey from Tsharka. There they exchanged their grain against salt brought by Drokpa caravans from the distant salt lakes far north of the Tsangpo, and according to the law of supply and demand the exchange rate fluctuated considerably. There was a time when the Tibetan authorities permitted only traders from Lo and Dolpo to purchase salt in Tibet, while those from regions farther south were allowed to trade in wool and livestock, but not in salt. Some of these traders brought the salt as far south as Tukche, while others bartered it for grain at Mustang, where traders from Baragaon obtained most of their supplies.

The salt sold to Thakali merchants by people of Dolpo, Lo, or Baragaon was stored at Tukche until growers of grain from the lower regions arrived with their produce to exchange it for salt, or Thakali merchants transported the salt on the backs of mules, donkeys, and porters to trade centers, such as Baglung or Pokhara. The rates of exchange have always differed according to the locality where the barter-deal took place, and to the law of supply and demand, while the

profits of the individual trader depended on his skill in manipulating these fluctuations.

Wool as well as live sheep and goats ranked next to salt on the list of exports from Tibet to Nepal. The wool was invariably sold in Indian markets, whereas sheep and goats were taken to the middle ranges or even as far as the Terai and sold wherever there was a demand. Neither of these commodities lend themselves to a straight exchange comparable to that of salt against grain, and their price was hence usually expressed in money. The goods that traders from Thak Khola took to Tibet and sold there to pay for their purchases of wool and livestock were partly of Nepalese and partly of Indian origin. Apart from food grains of all sorts, they included sugar, tea, spices, tobacco, cigarettes, paper, cotton cloth, and, in later years, a great variety of manufactured articles from razor blades to electric batteries.

Trade in the latter commodities was often handled by a single merchant, who bought goods in India, arranged for their transport to Thaksatsae, and then traveled with them to Lo or one of the Tibetan border villages. With the money received from their sale he bought commodities such as wool, which he transported to the Indo-Nepal border and sold to agents of Indian textile mills. In such cases the purchase of goods from Tibetan suppliers or producers, their transport across the whole breadth of Nepal, and their sale to the Indian consumer might be in the hands of a single Thakali trader based on the midway station and entrepôt of Tukche.

While considerable quantities of barley grown in Baragaon and Panchgaon were annually bartered for Tibetan salt, the part played in this trade by the products of Thaksatsae had always been small. Some barley grown by the villagers of Thaksatsae might find its way to Tibet, not because the growers had a surplus of food grain available for export but because they preferred to sell barley to Tibet and purchase rice from the lower regions. The role of the Thakalis was principally that of middlemen. It was significant that these men had risen to power and prosperity, whereas the producers of grain in Nepal and of salt, wool, and sheep in Tibet had never attained an economic standard comparable to that of the Thakalis.

The picture of the traditional economy of Thak Khola sketched in the preceding pages is based mainly on my observations in 1962. In the decade which has since elapsed there have been changes no less profound than those that have transformed the economy of Khumbu. Though in 1962 Tukche was no longer the focal point of all the business activities of the great Thakali merchant families, it continued to be an important entrepôt for the trans-Himalayan trade, and caravans of yak, mules, sheep, and goats arriving with goods to be stored in its great houses were still a common sight. A process of disengagement, however, had already

begun and most of the richest Thakalis had acquired houses and built up businesses in towns of the lower regions of Nepal, and came to Tukche only for short periods during the hot weather.

This drift away from Tukche was accelerated when the opening of a road suitable for motor vehicles from Bhairawa to Pokhara brought cheap Indian salt right into the heart of the area that used to be served by the salt traders of Thak Khola. While for a few years a preference for Tibetan salt, based on tradition and the belief in its beneficial influence on cattle, assured a limited demand even in Pokhara, the discrepancy in price was too great to allow this demand to persist. In 1972 Indian salt was sold in Pokhara for Rs. 2 per *pathi* while Tibetan salt cost Rs. 4.50 even in Tukche. By that time Indian salt had captured the market as far north as Tatopani and Dana. This meant the virtual end of the salt trade that had been the source of the prosperity of Tukche. Such Tibetan salt as still reaches Thak Khola is imported only for local consumption. The grain/salt trade is operated mainly by the people of Mustang and by Khamba refugees from Tibet, who have settled in Baragaon and use Mustang men as their agents. The quantities involved in this trade are small, however, and in Tukche only limited stocks of salt are kept. Cultivators from the middle ranges, locally known as *dakre*, carrying grain to Tukche and Jomosom mostly sell it for cash. They no longer want Tibetan salt, because in their own villages they can buy cheap Indian salt. The local people, however, still barter grain for salt needed for their own use. Thus in 1972 one *pathi* of rice was exchanged in Dana for two *pathi* of salt.

The trade in wool has also shrunk. The Chinese sell wool only in small quantities, and the big traders no longer find it profitable to engage in the wool trade. Such wool as still comes from Tibet is used for spinning, weaving, and carpet making by the people of Thak Khola, and does not find its way to other parts of Nepal. Indeed the price of Rs. 5–6 per pound in Tukche is marginally higher than the price for similar wool in Kathmandu.

The decline of Tukche as a trading center during the decade 1962–1972 has led to the emigration of most of the wealthy merchant families. Some of the houses have fallen into decay, and others are being looked after by caretakers, many of whom are Bhotias of Baragaon. Even some low caste blacksmiths and tailors have left Tukche because in the absence of their Thakali clients they could no longer make a living. In 1962, sixty-four of the ninety-two houses then constituting Tukche were still inhabited by Thakalis, but by 1972 only nine houses were occupied by their Thakali owners, and several of these were widows whose sons had already moved elsewhere. Fifty-five of the Thakali householders who had resided in Tukche in 1962 are now living in places outside Thak Khola. Sixteen of those families are residing in Kathmandu, fifteen in

Pokhara, and the rest in such towns as Bhairava and Nepalganj. The number of Thakalis including children in Kathmandu is close to 200, and my Thakali informants told me that in Pokhara there are at present about 100 Thakali families. Most of the Thakalis who moved to Kathmandu and other towns have established successful businesses, and some have entered government service. Many of the younger men have had a university education and the majority of the Thakalis living in Kathmandu are sending their children to prestigious private boarding schools. A Thakali educated at Sandhurst is a captain in the Royal Guard, and a number of Thakalis have studied in such countries as Great Britain, Russia, and Japan.

There is probably no other numerically small community in Nepal that has been as successful in turning a changed economic and social climate to its advantage, though clearly at the cost of abandoning its ancestral homeland.

Yet, by no means all Thakalis had to leave Thak Khola in order to maintain their standard of living. The inhabitants of the largely agricultural villages were less dependent on trade than the merchants of Tukche. They survived the dwindling of the salt trade without having to adjust their entire economy. They too, however, took advantage of the growth of Pokhara as a marketing center, as well as of the motor road which now links Pokhara with Kathmandu. Vegetables and fruit are being grown throughout Thaksatsae and Panchgaon, and the caravans of mules and ponies that used to transport salt to the middle ranges are now being used to supply Pokhara with potatoes, cabbages, carrots, cauliflower, and other vegetables grown by Thakalis.

Many Thakalis have also shown an interest in the development of tourism, for which Thak Khola offers hardly less scope than Solu and Khumbu. Already hundreds of tourists are trekking to Tukche and Jomosom, and some of the Thakalis who have opened hotels and restaurants in Kathmandu are talking of investing in facilities for tourists in Thak Khola.

BHOTIAS OF HUMLA

The third ethnic group to be considered in this context are the Bhotias of Humla, Nepal's northwesternmost region of high altitude. Unlike Khumbu and Thak Khola, this region remained until recently virtually unexplored. Little was known about the inhabitants except that in the course of their barter-trade with Tibet they crossed the passes which led to Taklakot, an ancient Tibetan trading center whose history has been traced as far back as the Malla Dynasty of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries A. D. The kings of that dynasty had ruled over a great kingdom

extending from Dullu and Kashikot in Nepal as far as Guge and Purang (Taklakot) in Tibet, and it is therefore reasonable to assume that Humla, the link between the northern and southern parts of that kingdom, must have served as a channel of trade for several centuries.

No study of trans-Himalayan trade can be complete without an investigation of that vital trade route and the regions which it traverses. For this reason I undertook in 1972 an exploratory survey, in the course of which I traveled from Jumla to Humla as far as the Nara pass close to the Tibetan border, and on the return journey I followed the trade route to Dullu, Dailekh, and Surkhet.

Among the problems I investigated in the course of the tour through the greater part of Humla was the present state of the barter-trade on which the majority of the northern border people has always been dependent. In the areas above about 8,000 feet, agriculture and animal husbandry cannot meet all the needs of the population. The deficit in the locally produced food is normally made up by earnings from trade. The traditional trading system of the people of Upper Humla was based on the fact that in Tibet grain is much more valuable than salt, while conversely in the middle ranges of Nepal salt used to fetch a much higher price than an equivalent quantity of grain. At the time when communications between India and the Nepalese Terai were poor, and a belt of malaria-infested jungles separated the Terai from the middle ranges, hardly any Indian salt penetrated into Nepal and the entire need was met by imports from Tibet. People living in the high valleys close to the border were best placed to handle the trade by which Tibetan salt became available to the inhabitants of the middle ranges and at one time even of the Terai. Used to high altitude and a cold climate, and equipped with warm clothes and boots, they could negotiate snow-covered passes and withstand the severe weather conditions encountered in Tibet. Most of them were Bhotias and spoke a Tibetan dialect as their mother tongue while at the same time they knew enough Nepali for purposes of trade. They also possessed pack animals suitable for use on difficult treks across the Himalayan passes. For the journey from their villages to Tibet they used yak as well as sheep and goats, but the transport of salt from Humla to the Hindu villages of the middle ranges was entirely by carrier-sheep and goats.

As long as Nepalese could freely trade with individual Tibetans and the people in the grain producing areas of Western Nepal depended entirely on the supply of Tibetan salt, the traders of Humla were assured of very good profits and a relatively high standard of living. For in such Tibetan markets as Taklakot they could exchange the grain their animals carried across the passes for several times its volume in salt, and they could barter unlimited quantities of wool as well as any number of live animals, such as sheep and yak. But the coming of the Chinese and the rigid control they imposed on the border trade deprived the Nepalese of the possibility of

doing business with individual trading partners. They still take grain to Tibet but must sell it at government trade depots at fixed prices and purchase salt at a rate determined by the Chinese. Thus there is no longer any bargaining; the quantity of wool available to Nepalese is limited and so is the export of livestock. Even more serious, however, is the drop in the value of salt in the middle ranges of Nepal. While old men of Humla remember the days when they bartered salt in the region of Acham, Bajura, and Raskot for seven to eight times the volume of rice, today the average exchange rate in these areas is one to one and the profits of the Humla people are consequently greatly reduced. The reason for this development is the availability of cheap Indian salt in the southern regions. With the improvement of internal communications Indian salt is bound to creep deeper and deeper into the middle ranges of Nepal, and to undercut the Tibetan salt brought there by the people of Humla.

The exact cycle of trade depends on the location of the traders' home village, but an example from the villages in the vicinity of Simikot will serve to demonstrate the pattern of movement involved in the operations of the average traders. Those people who own flocks of carrier-sheep and goats undertake the first trading journey to Taklakot immediately after the harvest of the winter crops at the end of June. They carry partly rice, bartered during the winter in the middle ranges, and partly barley grown in their own fields. In Taklakot they exchange grain for salt. In 1972 the rates were about one to two-and-one-half, barley to salt and one to five for rice to salt. On the way to and from Taklakot the sheep and goats are kept for some time on the rich pastures above Yari. Such trips may be repeated in July and August, until the traders have accumulated a sufficient store of salt for their trading expeditions to the middle ranges. After the end of the monsoon and the harvest of the summer crops, the traders set out with carrier-sheep and goats carrying salt, and move first along the valley of the Humla Karnali and then across one of the passes leading south to such rice growing areas in the middle ranges as Bajang, Acham, and Raskot. There they exchange their salt for rice. In 1972 the usual rate was one to one, or at the most five measures of rice for four measures of salt. They bring the rice back to Humla, and in November set out for a much longer journey. This time they take all their sheep and goats with them, even ewes and lambs which are not used for the carrying of loads. Again they barter salt for rice and sometimes other grain grown in the valleys of the middle ranges. Such grain is used partly for their own consumption during the journey and partly stored with trading friends in places such as Bajura and Acham. They then move slowly farther south, letting the animals graze wherever there are pastures, and finally they take their carrier-sheep to Nepalganj or Rajapur in the Terai. There they buy Indian salt, usually for cash which they obtain by selling woolen blankets or disposing of some animals for slaughter. This Indian salt is

taken to the middle ranges and bartered there mainly for rice. The reason why the Hindu villagers of Acham and Raskot do not fetch Indian salt themselves is their lack of transport. They have neither carrier-sheep nor other suitable pack animals.

The Humla people spend the whole winter on these migrations, for in their own villages there is at that time of year no grazing for their flocks, and the needs of animal husbandry thus coincide with those of the grain/salt trade. By the time the herdsmen are ready to return to Humla in April and early May, they have accumulated a store of rice and other grain which they now carry on their sheep and goats to their home villages.

The difference between the exchange rates in Tibet and the middle ranges of Nepal constitutes the profit of the traders, and enables them not only to live themselves during part of the year on grain grown at altitudes much lower than that of Humla, but also to bring back more rice and other grain than that required for their barter transactions in Taklakot. In this way they supplement with the grain obtained by barter their store of homegrown grain.

This rough outline of the pattern of journeys and barter transactions does not account for several other openings for the exchange of Nepalese grain for Tibetan salt. In the Humla region there are several trade marts where at certain times, usually early in November, Tibetans and men of such border villages as Yari sell salt and wool to people from the lower regions, and before the Chinese had concentrated the trade in Taklakot, there were similar marts at other points of the boundary.

It is obvious that this whole elaborate pattern of movements of people, animals, and goods depends on the possibility of selling Tibetan salt to the producers of a surplus of rice and grain occupying the middle ranges of Nepal. If their needs were to be met entirely by supplies of cheap Indian salt, the whole system would break down. The Tibetans could no longer dispose of their salt and the people of Humla would be unable to obtain the grain they need for supplementing their stores of homegrown grain. For they would have no commodity to offer in exchange.

The construction of roads from the Terai into the middle ranges, while no doubt beneficial to the traders of the lowlands, would thus have disastrous effects on the economy of the high-altitude dwellers of the northern borderlands. For these populations cannot subsist solely on the yield of their land, and if deprived of the profits from the salt trade they might be unable to maintain themselves in their present habitat. Even the seasonal migrations of their herds of sheep and goats, necessitated by the lack of winter grazing in Humla, depend on the sale of salt in the middle ranges. For without the possibility of bartering salt for grain, the herdsmen could not feed themselves in an area where they have no other sources of supply.

This leads one to the conclusion that by the improvement of communications in the lower region, rightly deemed advantageous for the economic development of its inhabitants, the economic basis of such zones of high altitude as Humla and Mugu may well be irreparably damaged. This danger, though clearly looming on the horizon, is fortunately not yet imminent. For the terrain is such that considerable time will elapse before roads can be driven into the middle ranges of Western Nepal. Ultimately, however, Tibetan salt will be replaced by the cheaper Indian salt, and the people of Humla will inevitably suffer from the loss of their markets.

To conclude this outline of the changing fortunes of three Himalayan trading communities, we may now consider the extent to which the type of trade described presupposes or conditions certain types of social structure. In doing so we are immediately faced by the question whether the pursuance of trade as a central economic activity produces certain social attitudes and arrangements, or whether people motivated by a specific outlook on life are more likely to achieve success in trading than communities conditioned by a different ideology. What then are the social coefficients of the commercial activities observed in the societies discussed in this paper?

Common to all of the Bhotia groups including the Sherpas is a social system that allows wide scope for individual choice both in economic activities and the ordering of social relations. Unlike the member of any of the Hindu castes of Nepal, the Sherpa is a free agent from a relatively early age. There is no obligation to, or control by, a joint family in which even adult sons with wives and children of their own are subject to the authority of an elderly head of the family. Among the Sherpas marriage coincides normally with the establishment of a separate household and every married son has the right to a share in the parental property. Hence, he is free to engage in trading ventures even should his father have been more interested in cultivation or the building up of a large herd. The risks he takes are entirely his own for no kinsman is under an obligation to come to his rescue or liable to pay his debts should a venture fail. Even unmarried daughters still living under the parental roof are encouraged to do some trading on their own, and many wives continue this practice and engage in business deals while their husbands are on major trading journeys. In the new situation of a growing tourist business which compels many Sherpa guides to spend months on end away from home, this traditional independence and business acumen of Sherpa women is a great asset. For a family's interests in the village would be gravely at risk were women not able to make decisions and run households and farms in their husbands' absence.

Similarly Thakali women engage in a variety of business activities independently of their spouses. It has long been Thakali practice to leave

during the winter the snowbound villages of Thaksatsae and Panchgaon and to move to the middle ranges where the men pursue their trading interests while women set up temporary taverns serving beer, liquor, and food to travelers, particularly the many soldiers on leave from Indian and British Gurkha regiments. Thakali women run these wayside inns entirely on their own, and the traditional mores of their society permit them to mix freely with their male customers. The widespread suspicion that they also are accessible to sexual advances is in my opinion totally unfounded, the virtual absence of illegitimate children being proof of the Thakali girl's ability to avoid too great an involvement with her guests. Thakali husbands and wives vie with each other in regard to the profits they make in their business activities and when at the end of the winter they return to their houses in Thak Khola the spouses try to outdo each other by proudly proclaiming their respective gains. Such a practice would be unimaginable in Nepalese Hindu society, which expects women to be submissive and severely restricts their interaction with men not belonging to the inner circle of their kin group.

But it is not only women who profit from the freedom Buddhist societies allow both sexes. The Sherpa, Bhotia, or Thakali man too enjoys a freedom from crippling restrictions which might impede relations with trading partners. Not bound by dietary taboos or the ban on dining with persons classed as socially inferior, he can accept hospitality wherever he goes and entertain in his own house anyone whose acquaintance may be economically advantageous. On his far-flung journeys he does not have to confine himself to the type of food permitted by the rules of his caste, and can seek shelter wherever convenient without having to fear pollution by persons of lower ritual status.

Anyone who has traveled in rural Nepal has experienced the difference in the attitudes of Buddhist and Hindu communities. In the former it is easy to gain entrance to houses, and offers of hospitality are usually freely forthcoming, while in Hindu villages no stranger is admitted to a private house and even his attempts to purchase victuals meet often with difficulties. Those Sherpas and Bhotias who traveled widely in Tibet were accustomed to a system of hospitality ideally suited to the needs of long-distance traders not only in need of shelter in an inclement climate but dependent for their business on relationships of personal trust established and strengthened by occasions for conviviality. They maintained this same tradition in their own houses and dispensed hospitality not only to further their business contacts but also as a means of building up their social prestige.

Sherpa society is basically egalitarian, and, though traces of a hierarchic order are observable among the Bhotias of Humla, these communities too are free of any deep rifts between classes of different status. Similarly Thakalis form a homogeneous society preserving the

ideal of the basic equality of all members despite a wide range in the wealth and political influence of individuals. The scope for mobility inherent in such systems favors the successful trader. A rapid rise in economic fortunes resulting from a few lucky business deals can lead to a corresponding increase in social status impossible to achieve within the more rigid framework of a Hindu caste society.

It is this mobility and the almost unlimited opportunities open to the energetic and talented individual which distinguishes a mercantile economy from an economic system based solely on agriculture. In an agricultural society resources are usually finite, for cultivation cannot be expanded beyond the limits of the available land. This is certainly the case in the mountainous areas of Nepal. The landholdings of any member of a community can thus be increased only at the expense of other villagers. The acquisition of wealth is hence usually a slow process, and no man born poor can hope to amass a fortune by his own efforts, though hard work and frugality may improve his position over a number of years. The field of activities open to the enterprising trader with a flair for foreseeing fluctuations in the market, on the other hand, is boundless and modest fortunes can be made within a short span of time. The communities I have discussed in this paper exemplify this position. The wealthiest men are found where agricultural resources are minimal, and the need to concentrate on trade is greatest. The merchants of Namche Bazar and Tukche are all far richer than any of the inhabitants of neighboring villages with more extensive land and better prospects for cultivation.

Yet, there remains a problem to be solved. In the conduct of their trans-Himalayan trade Sherpas, Bhotias, and Thakalis alike have depended not only on the salt provided by their Tibetan partners but equally on the grain they bought from the cultivators of Nepal's middle ranges, be they Rais, Magars, or Chetris. But these cultivators, exemplified by the *dakre* now appearing with baskets filled with rice at the weekly market of Namche Bazar, have remained a nameless crowd of small producers never aiming higher than the sale of the grain grown on their own land. Why, we may well ask, are there no Rai merchants who buy up the rice of their villlage, and deal with the great traders of Namche Bazar on equal terms, and why have Chetri counterparts of the merchant princes of Tukche not monopolized the grain trade in the lower Kali Gandaki Valley?

There is no clear answer to these questions, but it would seem that in agricultural communities that place a high premium on the ownership and acquisition of land there is little incentive to engage in the more risky business of commercial entrepreneurship. Moreover, high caste Hindus enmeshed in the net of family and caste obligations and bound by caste rules adding to the discomfort and hazard of travel outside their home ground may well find the life of long-distance traders distasteful. Content

with their simple houses and the adequate supply of locally grown food grain they do not hanker after the luxury and artistic embellishment found in houses of the great trading families of such Buddhist communities as Sherpas, Bhotias, or Thakalis of Tukche. Seeing merit above all in personal austerity and strict conformity to caste rules, they lack the initiative which induces wealthy Bhotia traders to devote their wealth to the construction of religious monuments, the endowment of monasteries, and the acquisition of prestige by the conspicuous dispensation of hospitality and charity.

The situation in Humla, which differs fundamentally from that prevailing in all the other border areas, may seem to raise some doubts about the validity of this hypothesis. For in Humla Bhotias and Hindus of high caste dwell in close proximity in the same environment and there are no significant differences in their ecological background. Moreover, many Thakuris and Chetris are as deeply involved in the salt/grain trade as any of their Bhotia neighbors. They spend several months every year traveling with caravans of sheep and goats between the Tibetan trade center of Taklakot, the middle ranges of Nepal, and often even the Terai, and they are no less skillful in the breeding and management of their pack animals than the local Bhotias. Yet, one can argue that the Thakuris' adoption of the trading pattern of their Bhotia neighbors does not necessarily invalidate the hypothesis that those operating within the Buddhist ideology and social system are more suited to the role of adventurous long-distance traders than those enmeshed in the net of Hindu caste rules. For neither the Bhotias nor the Hindus of Humla are true mercantile entrepreneurs comparable to the great Sherpa or Thakali merchants and perhaps some of the Byansis of Western Nepal and Almora. Although their trading pattern is fairly elaborate, it consists basically of a sequence of simple exchange transactions involving mainly cereals, salt, and wool. Even when Tibet was still open to traveling traders neither the Bhotias nor the Thakuris or Chetris went much beyond Taklakot, and none of them ever undertook extensive trading expeditions into Tibet such as had taken many Sherpas to Lhasa, Shigatse, and other towns. While the trade in salt, wool, and grain gave the people of Humla, both Buddhist and Hindu, a comfortable living as long as Tibetan salt met with no competition throughout the middle ranges of Nepal, this trade had never led to the amassing of great mercantile fortunes nor had it invested the operators with economic power equal to that wielded by the Thakali *subba* or even by the rich Sherpa traders of Solu.

Though Humla had once been a vital link between the southern and the northern provinces of the ancient Malla Kingdom which comprised the whole of Jumla as well as Purang, it has long been a backwater of relatively primitive farmers and cattle breeders. Their energetic trading activities did little more than make up the deficiencies in the local produc-

tion of essential food supplies and did not support cultural developments comparable to those which had sprung up along such major arteries of trade as the route leading through the Kali Gandaki Valley. The *gompa* of Humla are modest compared to those of Mustang and Thak Khola and there are no elegant and richly furnished private mansions on a level with those of wealthy Sherpa merchants.

There is a correlation between the development of great inequalities in wealth and the transition from the simple barter of basic commodities to a more complex trading pattern involving the use of money as medium of exchange and the flow of the products of craftsmen. More recently the flow has included manufactured goods, sometimes by way of middlemen belonging to neither. Thus, the grain/salt barter can be operated easily by egalitarian societies with constant and predictable needs and a fairly even standard of living. No great capital assets need be invested in the individual deals and the risk of heavy losses is minimal. Even men possessing no means of transport other than their own muscle power can participate in this trade, provided they are prepared to carry heavy loads over difficult routes. Their transactions appear profitable because the time they spend on their journeys is not regarded as an economic asset that could be put to a more rewarding use. But the profits attainable by this kind of trade are limited, even for those able to transport grain and salt on the backs of yak, mules, or sheep. Unless the barter of grain for salt can be combined with trade in commodities convertible into a medium of exchange current in the wider economy beyond the Himalayan borderlands, grain can only buy more salt and salt more grain, which may ultimately be in excess of the requirements of the populations engaged in the barter.

A different situation arises with the development of trade in livestock, which can be driven over great distances at little cost and be sold for cash in regions where such cash can be utilized for the purchase of trade goods capable of being disposed of at a large profit. Thus the Sherpa merchants who took large numbers of yak/cattle cross-breeds to Tibet were able to sell them there for cash and use this for the purchase of Tibetan luxury goods in demand in Nepal. Trade deals of this type led to the accumulation of capital which enabled the traders to extend their commercial interests as far as Indian and Tibetan cities. The Thakali customs contractors who acquired the monopoly of the local salt trade and dealt also in a wide range of Indian and Tibetan trade goods demonstrate that the barter in basic commodities and the complex trade linking the Indian and Tibetan economic spheres were not incompatible. Indeed, those operating the two systems successfully rose to great economic power and their mercantile skill derived from the experience gained in the manipulation of a far-flung commercial network has enabled them to play an active role in the development of modern industries.

Tibetan Communities of the High Valleys of Nepal: Life in an Exceptional Environment and Economy

CORNEILLE JEST

The high valleys of the Himalayas in Nepal are inhabited by groups that have retained the Tibetan language and culture. Although they have not been very well known until recently, they have now become the object of extensive ethnological research.

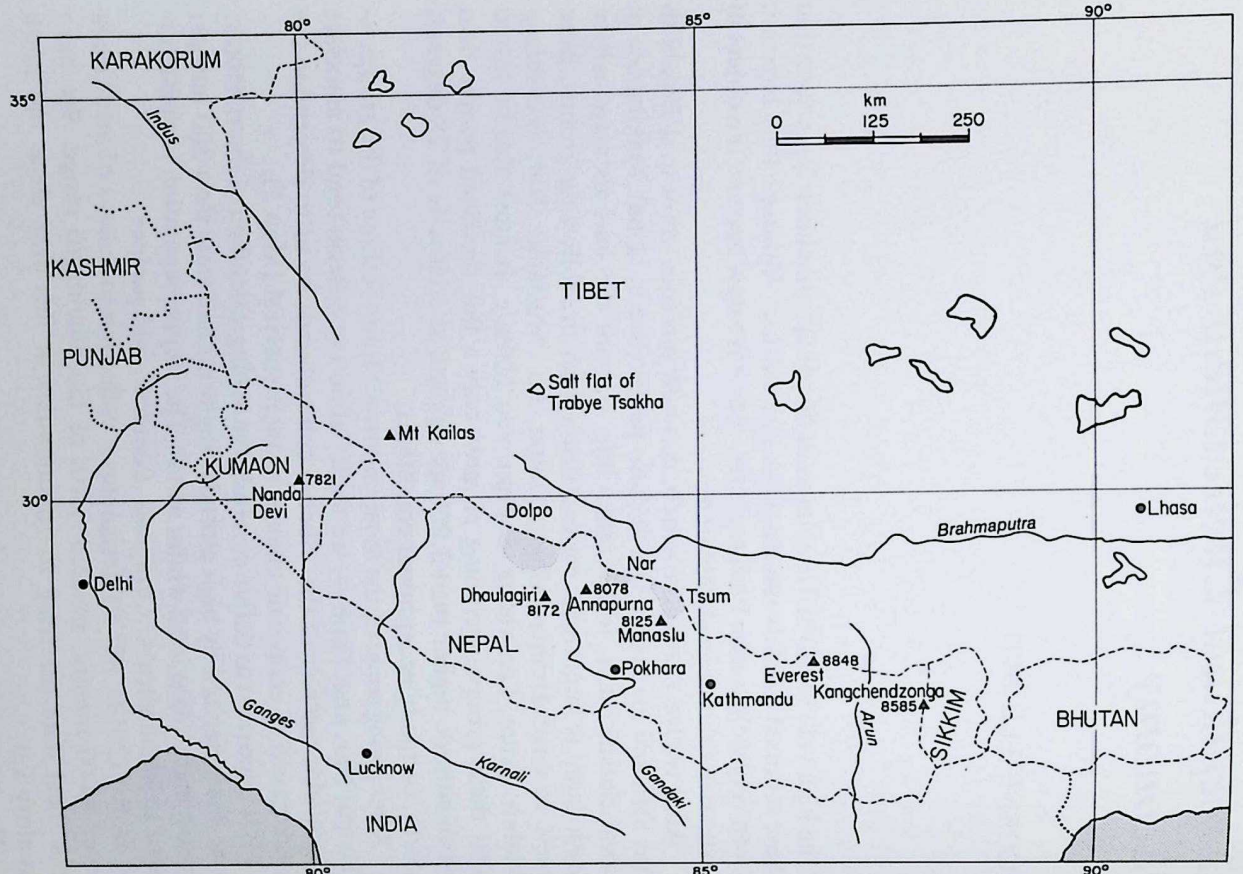
After twelve years of research, it is now possible for us to define both the area and manner in which these people live in Nepal. Making use of local classification, which takes into account the various areas where endogamy is important, we can distinguish the following groups, from west to east: Humla, Mugu, Dolpo, Lo (Mustang), Nar, Nyi-shang, Nub-ri, Tsum, Langthang, Sherpa, and Halung. It must also be noted that these groups, including at most only a few thousand people, live at an altitude higher than 3,000 meters and at a latitude of 28 degrees, north, certainly exceptional conditions.

After giving some of the most important traits of three of the groups — Dolpo, Nar, and Tsum — we shall define the criteria used to associate them with the rest of the Tibetan cultural area, so as to determine the importance of economic change in their survival (Map 1).

It is important to define carefully the ecological milieu of these people, one characterized by high altitude, slight rainfall (less than 300 mm per year), and violent local winter winds. The steppe vegetation is characterized by small shrubs: *Caragana, Lonicera*, and juniper.

Dolpo (29° N, 83° E) designates a collection of valleys of an altitude over 4,000 meters, situated north of the Dhaulagiri range. We have historical data referring to communities in this area since the tenth century A.D.

The 3,000 inhabitants of this region speak a Tibetan dialect and are organized according to the usual Tibetan model into administrative units called *cho*. The society is divided into four strata. Decision-making power


80°
85°
90°
35°
30°
KARAKORUM
Indus
KASHMIR
PUNJAB
TIBET
Salt flat of
Trabye Tsakha
Mt Kailas
KUMAON
7821
Nanda
Devi
Dolpo
Brahmaputra
Lhasa
Delhi
Nar
Dhaulagiri
8172
8078
Annapurna
Tsum
8125
Manaslu
NEPAL
Pokhara
8848
Everest
Kangchendzonga
8585
Kathmandu
SIKKIM
BHUTAN
Arun
Ganges
Lucknow
Karnali
Gandaki
INDIA
km
0
125
250

Map 1.

is in the hands of the religious head of the community and in the village assembly, made up of heads of families belonging to the two upper social strata. Members of the two lower ones, the blacksmiths and *bera*, have no right to participate in decisions made in the village assembly.

Agri-pastoral activities are divided between the cultivation of barley, considered to be the only cereal crop, and the raising of yaks and sheep. However, these activities are not sufficient to ensure the survival of the group. Dolpo residents thus exchange their own grain for Tibetan salt.

It is very important to emphasize that religion — Buddhism in its Lamaist form — is integrated into daily life and, in order to further reinforce this sort of symbiosis between the sacred and the mundane, one man from each house belonging to a high social stratum is destined to enter religious life.

Nar (28° 45′ N, 84° 18′ E), which belongs to the Manangbhot District, is located, like Dolpo, in the trans-Himalayan zone of steppelike vegetation and extremely slight rainfall. Access to this area from the south is particularly difficult, either by means of a 5,200 meter pass, or by the Nar-Khola gorges, which are only usable for six months of the year. Nar is composed of two habitations: Nar-me (Lower Nar) village located at 3,920 m, and a Nar-tö (Upper Nar) habitation at 4,000 m, together totaling around five hundred people. The two villages, built along a cliff, appear somewhat like fortresses. The fields are laid out below in terraces arranged to facilitate the irrigation process so indispensible to the cultivation of barley. According to oral tradition, the first inhabitants of this region came from the valley of the Tsangpo (Brahmaputra) and used the valleys of the Nar Khola as pasturelands. The cycle of their activities is patterned by the cultivation of barley (from May to September) and the tending of yaks and sheep in the summer in the high altitudes (above 4,300 m).

This group of people constitutes a single entity because of its history and the feeling its members have of being an ethnic group different from those surrounding it (Nyi-shang, on one side; Tibetan populations from the Tsangpo Valley, on the other).

Tsum (28° 30′ N, 85° E) designates the high valley of the Shar Khola, a tributary of the Buri Gandaki, north of the Ganesh Himal range. The groups of habitations are found between 2,800 m and 3,800 m in altitude. Crops, which are a bit more diversified than they are in the two zones described above, partially because of the influence of lower altitude, include barley, wheat, and buckwheat (*Fagopyrum tataricum*). Finally, they raise yaks and hybrids of these animals, as well as Tibetan sheep.

The inhabitants of Tsum trade their grain for the salt of the Pogrong area shepherds; in the south, they have contacts with Nepalese ethnic groups of the Buri Gandaki.

Monasteries and temples are quite numerous in this area and reveal, as

they do everywhere in these valleys, an intense spiritual life; indeed, it is a lama from Bhutan who is responsible for the religious and political leadership of Tsum, playing the role of an intermediary between the population and government of Nepal.

The three populations whose characteristics we have just outlined have the same origins. All of the criteria we have noted permit their classification within the Tibetan cultural region. First, anthropological traits, such as accentuated Mongoloid characteristics might be noted; also, the language (West Tibetan dialects), kinship system (fraternal polyandry), social organization (division into *cho* units, responsibilities resting in the village assemblies), and religion are significant in this regard. There are also certain popular beliefs that have had followers since before the rise of Buddhism, along with generic myths and religious legends about the "hidden lands" discovered by Padmasambhava, an Indian yogi who has become the principal divinity of the nonreformed Lamaist order of *rñiṅ-ma-pa*.

When we consider these groups as integrated into the whole of Tibetan culture, we can find some real isolates in which certain archaic traits have been preserved. It must be emphasized here that after Tibet became a autonomous region in the People's Republic of China, these traits became reinforced, since the Buddhist culture was eliminated from Tibet per se. Moreover, this has in itself justified further research.

The unity of these groups is most obviously seen through their techno-economic organization; they have all adapted their agricultural and pastoral activities to the demands of their natural environment. In all three cases we are dealing with populations in the zone located north of the main crestline of the Himalayan range, a very real barrier affecting the diffusion of monsoon rains and favoring a winter climate that is clearly continental. With regard to communications in this region, access to the southern parts is very difficult, while towards the north, i.e., the Changthang plateau, the approach is quite easy.

In a hostile environment, man has very limited means available to conduct his agricultural activities. Only barley of the *Hordeum hexastichum vulgaris* type is cultivated, along with some buckwheat of the bitter variety, *Fagopyrum tataricum*, and, for several decades anyway, the potato. However even production of the principal cereal crop, barley, is clearly quite deficient, providing an average of seven to eight months' worth of the people's annual needs, forcing them to depend upon barter for their survival.

The vast open spaces (between 3,800 and 5,000 m) are used for raising yaks (*Phoephagus grunniens*), robust animals that require little care and are perfectly adapted to life at high altitudes. The yak provides its owners with milk, meat, wool (used among other things for saddle padding), transportation, and helps in cultivation. The development of hybrids,

resulting from crossing with *Bos taurus* (Tibetan dwarf cattle) or with *Bod indicus* (humpbacked cattle) from medium-altitude valleys, has provided even more sources of revenue. These crosses have been carried out according to zootechnological reasoning, the result of economic calculations, and reveal qualities of both genuses — qualities much sought after by neighboring populations that have been less exposed to the rigors of this particular environment.

It is by a bartering system that the particular groups we have studied have been able to survive. We must continue to refer to the geographical location of these people. North of the high chain of the Himalayas extend the steppes of Changthang where the pastoral nomads, the Drog-pa, live. These people exploit the salt flats of the Trabye Tsakha region (31° 30′ N, 83° 50′ E), transporting the salt to the Nepalese border and exchanging it for barley and rice. It is the groups from the Himalayas who control these exchanges, finding a certain amount of profit in them (both grain and salt); their buyers usually are the inhabitants of the high valleys of Nepal who need salt badly.

We shall consider as an example the region of Dolpo, where the mechanism of the barter system is as follows. First, the men from Dolpo exchange a certain amount of barley for two measures of salt. Second, either in Dolpo or in the lower valleys, the men of Dolpo exchange one measure of salt for three or four measures of grain, depending upon the sort of grain concerned; it may be either barley, wheat, rice, or corn. Finally, the man from Dolpo, in getting rid of one measure of grain, manages at the final stage of the trade to get four measures of varied and complementary food products; he thus realizes a net gain of three measures. It is this complement of products that permits the population to live during periods of scarcity.

Salt, taken from the salt flats by the Drog-pa members of the Bompa group, is transported to the Brahmaputra and is exchanged either for products from north of the border between Tibet and Nepal, or for ones from one of the villages cited here. This mechanism of salt-grain trade, reinforced by hundreds of years of practice, occurs alongside a series of exchanges for other products (such as butter, dry cheese, or wool, on the one hand; wheat, corn, rice, and products manufactured in India, on the other).

For the populations studied here, the large profit they receive through the exchange process eliminates the food deficit by providing an indispensable link in the chain stretching over more than 700 kilometers covered in three months between the Tibetan salt flats and the Central Nepalese valleys producing grain.

Since the presence of these populations in the high valleys is not a recent occurrence, we might conclude that the survival of these populations has depended for a long time upon an economic equilibrium rather

than upon the sum of the various agri-pastoral resources available. Their geographical position has rendered relationships with them indispensable, as much for the nomadic shepherds of the north (who never venture into the valleys of Nepal) as for the Nepalese from areas south of the high mountain chain who fear great altitudes.

Physiologically adapted to a rough and difficult life, these people have developed an effective system of exchange and have established institutionalized relationships with their neighbors, the Drog-pa, as well as the Nepalese.

In 1960, the exchange of salt and grain suffered a great setback following political modifications undergone in Chinese Tibet. Solutions to the problems were found in Nar and Tsum, the inhabitants of these two regions moving closer to the mid-altitude valleys of Nepal in the winter to earn a living as artisans (spinners and weavers) or as porters.

Study of these populations might permit us to set up a model of the economic means of survival in an area that is both desolate and without sufficient natural resources.

Tibetan Culture and Personality: Refugee Responses to a Culture-Bound TAT

BEATRICE D. MILLER

Much of the literature in cultural and psychological anthropology of the past several decades has dealt with the problems arising when participants in disparate cultures have come into contact with each other through the exigencies of expanding colonial and, later, industrial interests. Far more recent, and to a degree more limited, is the literature dealing with the impact of what might be called *acutely* stressful situations. By this is meant situations in which the participants in an ongoing cultural system are suddenly subjected to immediate and drastic disruptions. These situations can be divided into two major categories: (a) those resulting from what might be called "natural" disasters, such as tornadoes, floods, droughts, and similar catastrophies (cf. Wolfenstein 1957; Wallace 1956a; 1956b); and (b) those stemming from human agencies (cf. Mead 1956; Ames 1957). Included in this latter category is the plight of refugees (European Jews, Gypsies, Catholics, and other target populations of the Nazis) prior to and during World War II, and the more recent refugee groups (from Hungary, Lithuania, Cuba, Israel, East Bengal, the United States, etc.); the list is almost endless for the past two decades. In some instances (Cuba, Hungary, Israel, Bengal) the refugees have anticipated the possibility of returning to their homeland and resuming most of the previous cultural patterns. In others, most strikingly the German Jews and the Tibetans, the precipitating factor leading to their flights had been what they perceived as an explicit threat of at least "cultural" genocide. Thus they have seen their flight as an attempt to preserve not only the actual lives of the refugees, but also the threatened cultural values and patterns.

In most instances, such as those of the European Jews, and other European, Latin American, South and Southeast Asian refugee flights, once the immediate problems of their hosts have been met (i.e., when the

refugees gradually disperse from refugee camps or their equivalents either back to their homelands as in the case of Bangladesh; or into new homes, jobs, and so forth as with the Americans in Canada and European and Latin American refugees in the U.S.), the refugees find many familiar cultural patterns interspersed among the specifically alien ones of their hosts. They are apt to find fellow speakers of their native tongue, as well as coreligionists. Usually their hosts share with them a whole complex of values and attitudes that serves to soften, even though it cannot eliminate, the impact of being alien. In terms of their physical environment, the new homes usually have much the same fauna and flora as they had previously known. While they may have to make minor adjustments in their diet patterns, the dietary shifts may be more in emphasis (e.g., less goat, more pork as a source of meat) or in variety, through the regular inclusion of foods, such as milk and eggs, known but little used in the home environment. At least some of the refugees may well have the types of skills and training that command high rewards and respect in the new situation. Many may already have formed business ties or other involvements with their hosts prior to the flight.

By contrast, the Tibeto-Indian impact situation was the extreme of "drastic" cultural disruption through human agencies with all the psychological and sociocultural problems that are attendant to some degree upon any situation of cultural stress. To find even a remote analogy in a Western context, one would have to imagine the Pope, his cardinals, and members of the Vatican staff, along with a sizable portion of the devoted Italian Catholic lay and clerical adherents, having to seek sanctuary in Judaic Israel. Their flight would have had to be motivated in part by the sincere conviction that Italian and Catholic culture was being utterly and completely destroyed in their homeland and that those who had not fled were being ruthlessly exterminated. Their only hope for preserving Roman Catholicism would be conceived as resting with this group. Add to the psychological and emotional strains produced by this burden, the stresses produced by the physical strangeness of the Negev and the need to comply with Judaic dietary laws, Sabbath, and other religious observances. The inadequacy of even this analogy becomes apparent when we turn to the actual situation involved in the Tibetan flight.

For well over a millennium, Tibetans have dreaded the "descent to the plains" or into India. Apparently thoroughly acclimatized to life at altitudes ranging well over 9,000 feet, migrant Tibetans rarely have settled voluntarily below 4,000 feet. Their literature is liberally strewn with references to the ill effects suffered by Tibetans who have had to descend to India for one or another purpose for a long period of time. Their familiar fauna and flora, such as the yak and its hybrids, sheep, and barley which furnished their major diet, are also coinhabitants of their

lofty plateau. Their flight meant being precipitated not only into a totally new environment, but into an ecological and geographical situation that was not only "strange" but has been traditionally labeled "dangerous" and to be feared.

Furthermore, the cultural strangeness of their new home is far more extreme than in most of the familiar refugee situations. Only a small portion of the refugees were sent to areas of India where they could turn to residents with similar values, patterns, and language. The majority were located in various areas of India far from any such ameliorative contacts. Despite the religious and spiritual significance of India for Buddhists, modern India, in addition to being officially a secular nation, is largely Hindu. The very areas of difference between Hinduism, especially as practiced in Orissa and South India, and Buddhism are those which directly affect the daily lives, values, and orientations of the respective practitioners. Caste barriers, dietary restrictions, totally different viewpoints on the relations between the sexes, and the composition and status of the custodians of the religion, coupled with linguistic and physical differences, present little possibility of preexistent patterns capable of bridging the gap between refugee and host.

If we take the stages of the "disaster syndrome" (Wallace 1970:202–206), the exigencies of becoming refugees — i.e., the need for precipitate flight — postponed or foreshortened what Wallace refers to as the first stage: characterized by apathy, passivity, and aimlessness. Those individuals who were truly stunned and dazed by the disaster associated with the attack on the Potala remained behind. Many of those who fled fell into the second stage: pathetically eager for support and reassurance and easily led and formed into teams; or into the third stage: mildly euphoric and altruistic, subordinating individual gain to undertake activity to restore and rehabilitate the community. This third stage is marked by "high morale and selfless dedication. Finally, as the euphoria wears off, there is full awareness of the long-term effects of personal and community loss" (Wallace 1970:202). In stage four come internal bickering, complaints, criticism, and widespread diffuse anxiety. This period of "cognitive dissonance" contributes to what Goldstein (this volume) calls the "refugee syndrome," although its distribution is not confined to refugees.

Yet, as Goldstein's paper demonstrates, and as our own and the Tibetan records verify, the groups settled in Mysore, for example, have managed to do extremely well, although the situation and conditions of the road camp workers and the other, still largely unsettled, Tibetan refugee groups are not nearly as promising. In fact many of our Indian friends and colleagues concur with the estimate that, had the Tibetan refugees come into India during a period when India's own problems were less grave than they have been since 1960, the refugees as a group might well have taken a place in Indian society comparable to the much

earlier — very successful — Parsi immigrant community. (Whenever India's international relations have been less stressful and its domestic development unfettered by drought, flood, and exacerbated tensions along its borders, Tibetan "success stories" have been numerous.) The structure of Indian society is by tradition pluralistic. The recognition and acceptance of plural cultural patterns and values inhere in the constitution as well as in the predominant philosophy, as long as the practices give no direct offense to other communities. When the Tibetan refugees first were being relocated some of their more obvious habits, like meat eating and alcohol consumption, did create occasional incidents, but most have learned to be more circumspect about such behavior, even when they do not abstain. Most would agree that what Goldstein calls the "stereotype refugee syndrome" of "homicide, suicide, alcoholism and insanity" has been a remarkably minor phenomenon, even though not totally absent among the Tibetan refugees.

Most of the refugees came to India in the wake of the flight of His Holiness, the Dalai Lama, or in the first few years of the 1960's. Thus the great majority of the "refugee Tibetans" (as distinct from those whose presence in India predates the past two decades) have been resident in India since 1959–1960. A few had come to India even earlier than 1959, but the mass exodus of that year more or less effectively cut their last ties to their Tibetan homeland. Only a very small number postdate 1962–1963, and those usually have arrived in India after brief stays in Bhutan, Sikkim, or Nepal.

Among those who came down in the first wave were very young children, the small number of elders who could survive the hazardous passage, and young and middle-age adults. They included in their ranks individuals who were accustomed to power, authority, and wealth, as well as beggars. Learned and highly revered "abbots" and hierarchs; lowly smiths; Buddhists, Bonpo, and Moslems; craftsmen; entrepreneurs; farmers; soldiers; nomads; officials; rebels and "brigands"; celibate and wedded; male and female; town and rural; they came from all the regions of Tibet and from all walks of life. The numbers resident in the camps and settlements have also been swelled as a result of a "mini-population explosion" during which, according to some of our informants, "Even old men — grandfathers — became fathers again!" In the eyes of the Government of India, these new additions are "of Indian origin," not refugees and, consequently, subject neither to the disabilities nor to the special considerations accorded their older siblings or their parents.

The foregoing explanation has indicated just a small portion of the diversity to be found among the individuals labeled "Tibetans in exile." The diversity could be further indicated by awareness of those individuals who have been settled in other nations and other continents, or who have studied elsewhere and returned to India. The question raised is whether

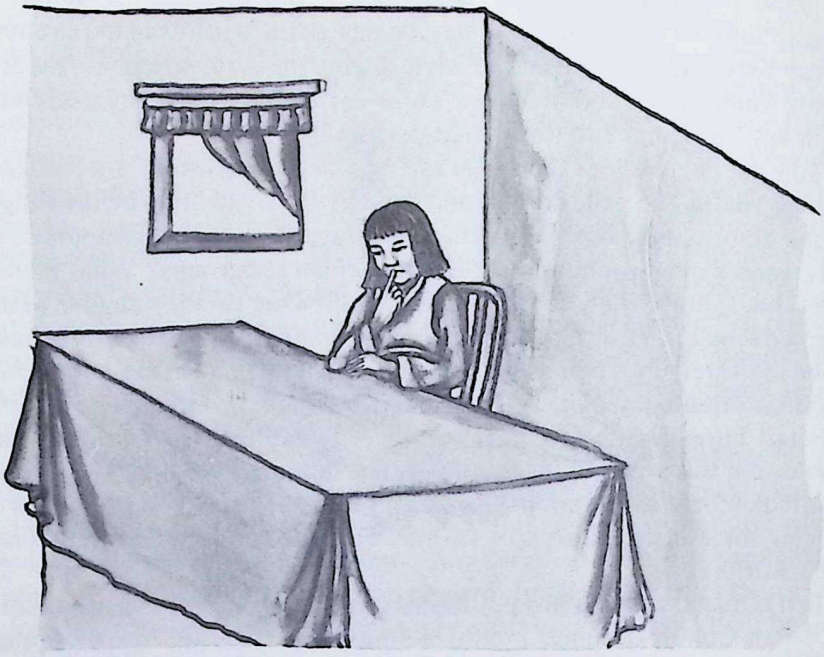
or not, despite the diversities in origins and experiences, any proportion of these individuals indicate equivalent — *not identical* or *shared* — perceptions of the meaning and significance of the world and the events in which they find themselves. To what degree do they structure "reality" along similar lines and are there more extreme dissonances associated with any particular subgroup membership?

To what degree does the range of "cognitive structures" encountered among Tibetans in exile correspond to what are assumed to be the ranges found among their hosts? In what areas are these correspondences or divergences most pronounced? Among which subgroups? What factors are actually most likely to be involved? And what do they augur? Many learned scholars, both Tibetan and foreign, including Indian and Chinese, point to the religious belief system as a primary factor. Others, principally Western-oriented, see the exile system in terms of the effectiveness of the Tibetan bureaucratic structure or the "Dalai Lama's Government" (Goldstein this volume). This study is not intended to either confirm or contradict these assumptions. Rather it has been devised in the hopes of gaining some insight into how various Tibetan refugees themselves see their world(s).

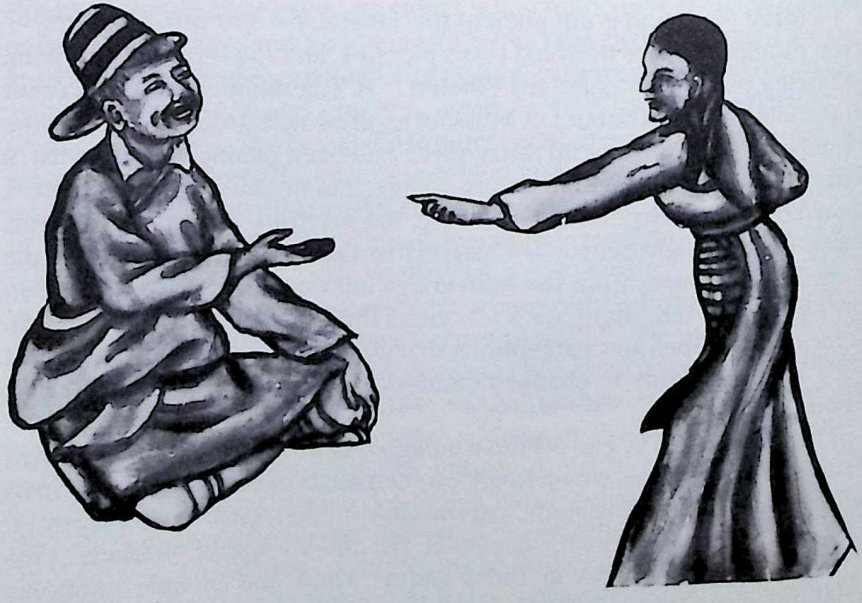
In this quest, which is in a preliminary stage, the author has turned to a "Tibetan Culture-Bound" modification of the Thematic Apperception Test series of pictures. Watrous and Hsu (1972:309–362) employed only two (I and XII) of the Murray TAT pictures. Others have used the whole set and of course, still others have also used modifications of the original TAT pictures.

Pictorial depiction is not alien to the Tibetans — nor is story-telling — even though the uses to which these pictures, and the responses to them, are being put is not "standard Tibetan." A Tibetan monk-artist-teacher at the main Tibetan School in Mussoorie, drew up a group of thirty-three sketches. The scenes for all thirty-three had been planned by the artist, a Tibetan graduate student in anthropology, and myself. From this group I selected eight illustrations. Obviously, the arbitrary decision to use just these specific eight scenes is designed to facilitate comparisons of the ranges of responses from the individuals interviewed. It also rests upon my hypothesis that there are a few areas that are central for insight into some of the values and perceptions that contribute to the high degree of Tibetan adaptability to changed circumstances (cf. Miller 1956b, 1961, 1968, 1969, 1974).

Thus, scenes I, IV, and VI have a degree of comparability to standard Murray TAT pictures which touch on such areas of American concern as self-reliance or achievement, parent-child dependence-resistance relationships, and sibling rivalry. Scenes II, III, and V impinge on facets of the Tibetan cultural milieus in India and/or Tibet and include monk-lay relations, more than two adults in relationship to children, more than two



Sketch I.



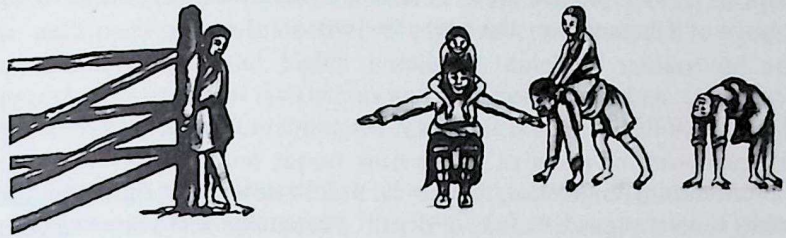
Sketch II.

Sketch III.

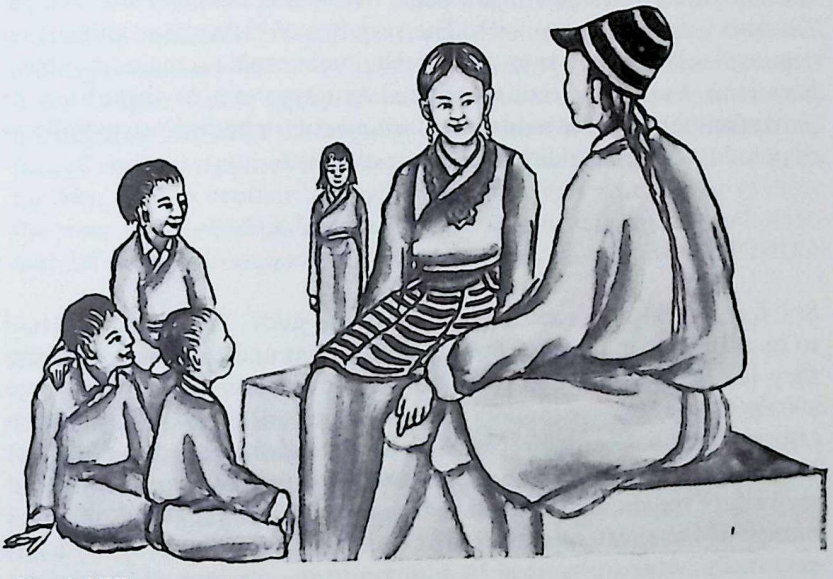
Sketch IV.

Sketch V.

Sketch VI.



Sketch VII.



Sketch VIII.

generations in interaction, and sex and sex relationship stereotypings. In two of the pictures (VII and VIII) the numbers of individuals depicted were chosen to elicit interpretatons regarding family size and peer-group relationships. The "peer-group" picture also seeks to investigate whether or not peer-group inclusion or exclusion might rest on a class basis.

In addition to promising more likelihood of comparability of responses, the restricted number of pictures offered greater ease — and lesser expense — of utilization and distribution. His Holiness, the Dalai Lama, is in possession of the photographed copies of all thirty-three illustrations and the eight are specified. One set of eight is in Sikkim where it was hoped that it could be administered to both the Sikkimese and the Tibetan children enrolled in Enchay School. Another set is

destined to be used in Nepal among a group of Tibetans in exile there. I hope to be able to have these TAT responses from many more diverse groups of Tibetans over the next few years.

THE STUDY

Before turning to the data, it might be well to state at the outset that this study is *not* designed as: (a) "in-depth" personality analyses, *nor* (b) an attempt to establish a Tibetan "basic" or "national" or even "modal" personality structure. Rather the concern is for acquiring an understanding of the respondents' ranges of perception and variations of cognition. It would be a grievous error to assume that we are dealing with "typical Tibetans," if there be any such. The very fact of exile status indicates a degree of self-selection from among the numbers who remained in their homeland. Further selection occurred in terms of the disposition of particular individuals to road camps, settlements, schools, etc., in India as opposed to Nepal, Sikkim, Bhutan, or overseas.

CONDITIONS

Still further selection occurred in terms of the study. The individuals had to be accessible in terms of both their locations and their activities and they had to be willing to participate in an interview. From my own standpoint, since I was in India as my husband's dependent, rather than having a visa for formal research, I felt bound to refrain from direct involvement with the various settlements, schools, and camps where the majority of the respondents reside. Our circle of Tibetan friends in Delhi necessarily was restricted to members of the "elite" from whom I did personally obtain responses. In addition to my concern regarding the legitimacy of such research from the standpoint of the Government of India, I also felt the need to receive His Holiness's acceptance and consent, before undertaking more than a few "trial" interviews. Thus, the bulk of the responses were obtained in the last ten months of our 1970–1972 stay and subsequent to our return to the United States in the fall.

With these considerations in mind I turned to a young Tibetan student from an agricultural family, who had been graduated from the school at Mussoorie and begun higher studies at St. Stephen's College in Delhi. This young man is literate in both Tibetan and English. He has spent the bulk of his life in India but retains childhood memories of his homeland. He has a family background similar to the bulk of the refugees. His mother was a sort of "fringe" member of an Orissan settlement before the

group was relocated and allotted land in a new settlement in Mysore in 1972. He had already undertaken some interviews along other lines for the anthropology graduate student previously mentioned. He is dedicated, inquisitive, and highly intelligent, quick to understand and appreciate the sorts of restrictions and directions I gave him. Obviously, this indirect mode of obtaining the responses is not an ideal one since he could not observe and report such things as affective tone, response situation, and other factors that a trained anthropologist would note. Nor could he follow through specific lines of inquiry that the responses stimulate. On the other hand, perhaps the exigencies of my situation had certain positive compensations. The most obvious, of course, is that most of the respondents were not confronted by an alien — specifically American — interviewer's presence, which might well elicit what would be considered "desired" responses. It could be made reasonably clear that the inquiries were not on behalf of missionary, C.I.A., Government of India, or Dalai Lama's government interests. Secondly, the interviewer's excellent command of the languages meant that he could understand and record verbal responses in either language. Finally, the fact that he, his mother, and his brother had had experiences that were similar to those the respondents had undergone may have allowed for more frank statements than would otherwise be made.

PROCEDURE

Each respondent was shown all eight pictures in sequence. Then the respondent selected one from the eight to develop in detail either a story or other interpretation of the scene depicted. Many of the respondents' short accounts of "What would you say this picture is about?" have been recorded, along with, but separate from, their more detailed interpretation of the picture they selected. In four instances, a respondent interpreted a second picture in detail. They are included within the present total of ninety-one responses. Each respondent was further questioned as to his or her life history. To assure the individual that he could speak freely about his experiences both in Tibet and in India, they were guaranteed anonymity. Since many of those in exile have left families and friends behind or have other reasons to fear reprisals, total anonymity was assured by making no record of names of either the family or the individual. Instead each respondent was assigned a code letter or group of letters, depending upon which of us did the interview. The life history and the responses were both recorded in writing during the interview.

In the life history the status of the individual (and/or that of the parents) and the occupation both in Tibet and in exile are recorded. In addition we obtained information regarding birth order, family structure,

places of origin for both parents and children, educational experiences in and outside Tibet, present cohabitation composition, instigators and participants in the flight, or protectors during and subsequent to fleeing and their relationship to the respondent or the respondent's guardian(s). For status and occupation we sought as much as possible to obtain the original Tibetan or regional classification terms.

THE RESPONDENTS

Of the total of ninety-one responses to date, seventy, including four duplicated responses, come from males, twenty from females, and one where there is no clear indication of the respondent's sex. Twenty-seven of the male responses were from married individuals, eight from monks, and the balance from single individuals. Five of the female respondents were married. Twenty-six of the males and nine of the female respondents were under twenty. The predominantly male responses may be at least partially a function of the male interviewer and the situations or locations where he had obtained the interviews.

Thirty-seven respondents had either been *Shingpa* [farmers] or were the children of *Shingpa*; sixteen either had been or were children of *'Drog.pa* [herders] including *Sa-mai-drog.pa* or *Shing-drog* ["agro-nomads" or "agricultural herders"], *She-ma* [herders in service to a *Ger'pa*] or *Chhug-dzi* [herdboys]. Three came from *Dan-yog* [bound household servant] families. Thirty-seven had been, or were, the children of traders, weavers, masons, ironsmiths, goldsmiths, caravaneers, or officials of varying status, including members of His Holiness's family. In some instances, one parent had more than one occupation or another parent had a different occupation, so the total is higher than the total number of respondents (ninety-three as opposed to eighty-seven).

In India, forty-five of the respondents were residents of various settlements or camps, eight were monks, and thirty-four were either students at schools or colleges, independent entrepreneurs, or, in three instances, attached to the Dalai Lama's government in official capacities or as teachers.

Table 1 represents a deliberate rearrangement of the picture sequence from the order in which the sketches are presented to the respondents. This rearrangement is intended to stress two factors: (a) the number of responses totally and along sex lines of the respondents, and (b) the sex(es) depicted in the sketches.

One could easily assert that the reason for the relatively high number of responses to sketch I is at least partially a function of its being the first picture presented. However, this conclusion is rendered less tenable by the fact that sketches III and V also elicited the same number of responses

Table 1. Distribution of respondents' selections of pictures for interpretation. (The pictures are arranged in descending order of total responses)

Picture	Sex depicted	Total responses	Total male	Males by age 10–20	21–30	30+	Total female	Females by age 10–20	21–30	30+
I	Female	14 (15%)	9 (13%)	5	1	3	5 (25%)	2	3	0
III	Male	14 (15%)	13 (18%)	4	6*	3	1 (5%)	1	0	0
V	Both	14 (15%)	12 (17%)	3	4	5	2 (10%)	2	0	0
II	Both	13 (14%)	10 (14%)	5	1	4	3 (15%)	1	0	2
IV	Both	9 (10%)	8 (11%)	1	3	4	1 (5%)	1	0	0
VI	Both	9 (10%)	7 (10%)	3	2	2	2 (10%)	1	1	0
VII	Male	9 (10%)	8 (11%)	3	1	4	1 (5%)	1	0	0
VIII	Both	9 (10%)	4 (6%)	0	2	2	5 (25%)	3	1	1
Totals		91 (100%)	71 (100%)	24	20*	27	20 (100%)	12	5	3

*The ambiguous respondent.

so far, while II and IV were chosen less often. If choice were influenced solely by order of presentation this descrepancy should not occur.

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

Sketches I and V

As the responses to sketches I and V started coming in, two interesting problems came to light. Regarding sketch I, even if a particular response was given in the first person as an "actual experience," there was no reliable clue as to the real sex of the respondent without turning to the attached life history. The identification with the solitary female seemed to be equally as thorough if the respondent were a male or a female. In one such instance of a male respondent, perhaps the rebellious spirit regarding "female limitations" might have been an indication, except that there are also "rebellious" females. A similar phenomenon occurred in response to Sketch V, namely that the individual chosen for "identification" in the sketch of an elderly man, a male and female young adult, and a small child, could not serve to predict either the age or the sex of the respondent. There seems to be the potential for any sort of cross-generational, cross-occupational, or cross-sex empathy or even identification. This sort of response runs through the interpretations found for the other sketches also, although sketches I and V elicit the most dramatic illustrations so far. The first few times this occurred, I checked carefully to see if there might have been some misordering of life history and response, or if the respondent's sex had been incorrectly indicated. There had not been any such errors. There is one account for sketch III where the information in the life history with the absence of an express statement as to sex affords no real clue. In this case I arbitrarily assigned the response to a male, simply because, with such few female responses adding it to the female would have doubled the percentage of females responding to this sketch.

Sketch III

Sketch III, depicting an encounter between a monk and a "hippie," also produced sometimes unexpected responses. First, notice that this seemed to be a favored selection for males in the twenty-one to thirty age bracket, as well as having the greatest number of general male responses (assuming * is male). Only two of the eight monks, however, chose this sketch, whereas two also had chosen sketch I and each of the other four chose respectively sketches IV, V, VII, and VIII. (Perhaps the solitude of

sketch I accounts for its monkly appeal.) However, even here the choice of "identification" with the monk or the "hippie" did not automatically reveal the occupation of the respondent. One, in fact, quoted a Tibetan saying *Tag-gi ri-mo, chi-la-yo mii ri-mo, nang-la yo* [Tigers' features are outside, men's features are inside], not unlike our own version, "Don't judge a book by its cover or a man's worth by his dress." On the other hand, nonmonks sometimes identified themselves with the monk. There were two opposing views expressed. In the majority of responses, the theme that "Clothes do not make the man" appeared. Either the "hippie" would demonstrate that he had a good heart despite his mode of dress, or he would heed the kindly counsel of the monk and turn over a new leaf, even to the point of taking the monastic vows. In a much smaller number of the responses, he was seen not as an "avant-garde" or "hippie," but as a beggar who had been brought to his sorry condition by throwing in with evil companions. The road to ruin was constructed of greed, miserliness, gambling, drink, and narcotics. Just as one's downward fall is attributable to the wrong companions, so too the kindly concern of friends, siblings, teachers, spouse, mother, or children serves to save the misled. In fact, in all the sketches this theme has been apt to appear. Very few of the "beggar"-"hippie" or other "misguided" souls seen in the other sketches remained in their depraved condition.

Sketch II

Next in popularity to the foregoing three sketches is sketch II, depicting a laughing man and a gesticulating woman. This elicited its most numerous responses from males under 20 and males and females over 30. The most frequent response was that, "This is not the way couples behave." "This is a very unusual and 'un-Tibetan' scene" and then a more-or-less lengthy dissertation on the presence of love in marital relations, the sterling qualities, the equal and harmonious voices of the marital partners, and the family as a cooperative unit. No one doubted that the woman was scolding the laughing man. Some thought he had perpetrated some irresponsible deed (associating with those wicked companions again). The woman really bothered most of the respondents. They stressed that the female qualities include wisdom, gentleness, patience, and rationality. The male is far more apt to be impetuous, violent, and swayed by emotion. Had the sketch reversed the activities assigned to the respective participants there apparently would have been more acceptance of the scene. If they conceded the existence of such women as the one depicted, then the male was behaving in a calm and rational manner to restore her to her senses, once again the theme of saving the misled.

Sketch IV

Sketch IV depicts a woman feeding a young male child, while an older female child appears to be moping. Again, most of the respondents who selected this sketch, the bulk of whom were over 20, seemed to do so mostly to argue with it. No one identified with any of the individuals. Instead a typical comment would be to the effect that: "This must be an abnormal mother. She is certainly not a Tibetan mother. No normal Tibetan parents would show preference to a child on the basis of sex." If the possibility of preference to one or another child was allowed at all, it usually would be in terms of age — the younger child being more dependent, or the older child supposedly being more responsible. Some could understand the mother better if she had been showing more attention to the daughter because "they're closer." In response to this sketch and to the other sketches in which a child or children and adults appear (V, VI, and VIII), the theme that most frequently appeared was: "We Tibetans do not regard children as gifts from God. They come into the family as the effects of *las* or karma. It is the parents' karma to have produced them and their karma to have entered this family, just as it is the parents' and the children's karma as to the sex they'll have. It is the parents' duty to take good care of their children, to guide them into a good life in the future, regardless of their sex. Hopefully when the child or children grow up, they will repay their parents' kindnesses." Many would wax bemused or sorrowful at the differential preferences that they noted among their Indian hosts. Again, the idea of a family as a harmonious unit dependent upon the cooperation of all its members is stressed. If the mother is not being unnatural or abnormal, there is assumed some major flaw in the girl's character that leads to her unpleasant expression, or else there has been a preceding unpleasant experience that accounts for her demeanor.

Sketch VI

This sketch, containing two adult females and one adult male interacting with a male and a female child, produced several intriguing responses. Six of the nine respondents interpreted it as an example of a *Sa-Sum* [three-spouse family]. Despite the pictorial representation of two women and one man, most devoted major attention to polyandrous arrangements. While aware of the fact that polygyny was also practiced in Tibet, most explained that the two female, one male union had little future, if it were not already becoming extinct among the refugees. By contrast, the rationales for two male, one female families were even more operative in their adopted home than ever before and were growing apace. As Buddhists, they indicated, they could not sanction abortion any more than they

would contemplate infanticide. Possibly similar restraints might operate against positive contraceptive measures. However, the one woman, two man *Sa-Sum* was an effective birth control measure that did no violence to their religious principles. The joint wife could only produce once a year, no matter how many husbands she had. Moreover, especially in the settlements and camps, the woman with two men to perform the hard or heavy labor could devote her time to strictly domestic or maternal pursuits.

In the course of their discussions regarding *Sa-Sum* all would make the point that the variations that families could take were strictly of familial and individual, rather than of religious or governmental, concern in Tibet. The goal remained the sort of unity already described. The paths for achieving that goal could vary as the occasion, the participants, or the situation required.

When the two women in the sketch were not viewed as "twin mothers" as one informant had described a polygynous *Sa-Sum* family, then the second woman was dubbed an "aunt" who was able to act as intercessor for the unhappy "nephew." I have no firm evidence as to whether actual parent-sibling relation was involved, but from the gist of the story, I have inferred that she is probably being viewed as "father's sister," rather than mother's. Another comment that this scene elicited was that, "Parents or adults should not side with one or another child in a fight." "Let the child fight his own battles" and "take his lumps." Parents could attempt to effect a reconciliation between the children, but otherwise they should stay strictly out of it if peace and harmony are to prevail (especially if the children of more than one family are involved).

Sketch VII

Originally, this sketch of five boys of varying age playing while one is just an onlooker, had been selected with the idea that it might provoke responses to the effect that the onlooker belonged to a different social or economic background than those engaged in play. From this standpoint, the sketch to date has been a total failure. With the exception of one response, that of a sixteen-year-old daughter of a nomad family, whose tale recounted the woes of a sickly herdboy who had lost two sheep while his companions callously ignored his plight, totally different themes appeared. Most pronounced was the idea that the boy was isolated by his own decision. Either he had been sent out by a teacher to instruct the boys to return to the classes from which they had "taken French leave," or he was brooding about something else, or his parents had kept him indoors and restricted him to the point where he "no longer" could play actively. The other boys were either a pair of siblings and their friends, or assorted

friends with the bigger ones indulging the smaller ones' whims. The boy hanging back was being invited by the "acrobat" to join the group and he would soon join the play. In no instances so far is he an onlooker because he has been ostracized. Several responses indicated that in Tibet there had been no "organized" sports. One noted that the games and activities the children engaged in were observed by adults and often interpreted as omens. War or warlike games became pronounced in the period preceding the Chinese occupation. In less troubled times the favorite games had been *Jakal Markal* (Tea and Butter), a Tibetan version of "playing house." And two respondents, both males, observed that the absence of girls in the scene was not typical of Tibetan children's activities. Most respondents positively indicated that children from all economic or social levels played together. More organized sports had become pronounced in the Indian milieu and were being eagerly adopted.

Sketch VIII

Sketch VIII, depicting an adult man and woman, three youthful males, and one girl proved least popular with the male respondents to date and equaled sketch I in popularity among female respondents. All, except one female student, interpreted the scene as being strictly familial. (The exception had the youths as village children benefiting from the beneficence of the family comprised of the girl and the two adults, to the girl's initial resentment and jealousy.) The others understood it as a family gathering either because the man ("father") had just returned from a trading venture, or had some other "experiences" to relate, or because the future course of the children's lives was to be discussed and planned. In one instance, (a twenty-one-year-old male respondent), the tale the father related was the information he had obtained about the problems of an Indian friend, with a daughter to marry off and unreasonable dowry demands from the prospective groom's family. The discomfiture the girl in the sketch expressed was because she did not realize that her brothers were teasing about how much money *they* could demand in India and how much they would contribute to getting her married off. Subsequently, she was reassured that "Tibetans do not do it that way," but that someone would have to "beg and request" *her* hand in marriage. The sketch was used similarly by many of its respondents to explain other aspects of family bonds and interrelations. One informant observed that the group was too *large* to be a "typical" Tibetan family, another that it was too *small* to be an "ideal" Tibetan family, but that the adults looked sufficiently young and vigorous to produce more. The active desire and welcome for children regardless of sex was also expressed in terms of karma. It was the duty of the parents to plan for and assure the future

well-being of all their children. This was done by guiding and instructing the elder children toward "good" behavior. The younger children would receive their initial guidance from their elder siblings. (In one response, the girl did not understand that "she was not really being excluded, but was still to young for such a family conference".) In another, she had just been reprimanded severely for misbehavior and was still unhappy about her mother's anger. As with sketch VII, the isolation of one individual — in this instance the girl — was seen not as the intent of the others in the sketch, but as self-inflicted. As with sketch VII, it would be momentary, and the isolate would soon be joining the group. Another theme that came out was that the children would go off from the parental home (into a monastery, into the army, into trading or other ventures, or into the home of a spouse — either a son as a *magpa* or a daughter as a *nama*). Ideally one child, often but not necessarily the oldest son, would bring his (or her) spouse into the family home and the parents could retire from their active responsibilities. The others might go off "thousands of miles apart," but if the family relations had been warm and harmonious they might all congregate, ideally for annual family reunions. "It is a universal truth that as one meets, one must separate and so must they."

GENERAL THEMES

The foregoing has discussed the sorts of responses obtained for individual sketches. However, there are general themes running through the various responses that do not pertain to any particular sketch, or which do not appear obvious at first.

Tibet Orientation

Foremost among these, at least indirectly, is the fact that sketches I, III, V, and VII are drawn from situations associated with the Tibetans exiled in India. (Many of the respondents, for example, commented on the hairdo, dress, and furniture in sketch I and on the presence of a wooden fence in sketch VII.) Sketches II, IV, VI and VIII are less explicitly tied to Indian exile and could be seen as occurring on the plateau. Yet by far the overwhelming majority of responses interpreted all sketches *as if* they were set in Tibet. This was as true for respondents who had left the plateau as four- or five-year-olds, as for those who had come to India as adults. Where their knowledge of life on the plateau disputed the scene (as in sketch I particularly, or sketch VII), adjustment was made in terms of time — i.e., subsequent to Chinese occupation. Very few alluded to specifically Indian locales, even in response to sketch III with the "hip-

pie" complete with flare pants or to sketch V, which depicted working on an Indian road. Almost all the respondents, regardless of family occupations or status in Tibet, depicted life on the plateau with extreme nostalgia. They might — and did — criticize many aspects of that life, but they stressed the warmth of interpersonal relations even between those of different backgrounds. Many referred to their "precious home" and the "halcyon days" prior to the events that led to their exile. Even those who most bitterly denounced the *Dan-yog* and similar institutions — primarily the younger respondents — seemed determined to return and to create a new, more perfect Tibet.

Future Orientation

Of those who did see the road workers, only one, a mission-educated college student from an "official" family, pictured the scene as one "fifty years in the future" with himself as the old man despairing at the ignorance of the younger adults about their homeland. At least in their responses, the others were largely far more optimistic about the future. A part of this may be attributed to the feelings that have surfaced among many that they may soon be able to return to the plateau *as* or *if* China's more mellow attitude toward the rest of the world extends to their homeland.

Whether or not this optimistic future orientation is the result of current developments, it is very strong. The *duty* of adult Tibetans to love, cherish, and guide the upcoming generation is a theme that has been stressed by the Dalai Lama's government. Either the respondents have thoroughly incorporated it, or it is one that they had held before in relation to their children and the Dalai Lama's government emphases have only verbalized them, and extended the concern beyond the immediate family circle.

Coupled with this "future orientation" is the idea that the elderly should be respected for their wisdom. "The old person is for advice. The young bird is for feather." However, while the responsibilities of the old to the young were phrased as obligations, or duties, the relationship of the young to the old was far less binding. Thus, in many cases it was phrased as "hoping" that the young would appreciate their elders' endeavors on their behalf. It was "hoped" that the children would "repay their parents' kindnesses" and assume those responsibilities that would enable the parents to pursue more spiritual and soul-satisfying concerns. Where the family had been truly "a harmonious, cooperative unit" and the children felt love and respect, this would occur. However, sometimes the exigencies of flight or other economic pressures, or an offspring's demanding spouse would deprive the elder of such opportunities which, for the "grandfather" in sketch V, included the opportunity to cook for the

family and to take care of the grandchild and the home. In one response, two demanding and overprotective parents who tried to bring their son back home drove him to despair and even to suicide, in the young respondent's story.

The Preciousness of Life

The full enormity of the suicide mentioned above can only be understood if one perceives life as one's most precious possession. In discussions of the presence or absence of children, as indicated above, this came out. The horror of aborting or taking life is given as a rationale for polyandry, as a rationale for welcoming equally children of either sex. The loss of life would be in accord with an individual's karma. But for an individual to take a human life, even his own, this would have the gravest effects on his future lives. There is no real eternity, but the cycles of rebirth can cover eons. Both in those responses to any sketches which took the form of an account of the flight from Tibet and in the life histories this theme reappears constantly. The flight resulted in parents leaving children, children leaving parents, spouses leaving spouses behind. The emotional cost was extreme. Life is the one irreplaceable treasure.

"On Ganden's Throne There is No Seal (The Work Ethic)

One's being born into a good or bad family or situation or one's producing or not producing specific children are products of the respective karmas. What one does with the precious treasure is not. If one uses the precious life properly, good karma results; if one abuses it, suffering is the consequence. Good uses for a parent are providing for the children a harmonious family life and a heritage for the children of both material and social well-being. If possible, at least one son will enter a monastic order. Ideally he will apply himself diligently to his studies and to his spiritual enrichment; much to his own credit and to that of his parents. Within the order, the possibility of ascending to the Throne of Ganden (the position of the Gelugpa's highest ecclesiastic authority) is the same sort of promise made in the American ideal "any man's son may become president." One cannot ascend the throne by virtue of being discovered to be the incarnation of the preceding occupant(s). One can only *earn* this most significant and exalted position by displaying the overwhelming qualities of spirit and mind that lead to election for a specific term. To develop them takes time and total dedication. Only one who has *proven* himself worthy will be considered.

Obviously, few of the respondents entertained the idea that they or one

of their children could aspire to such eminence. However, more modest goals can also be achieved by striving toward them. Respondents who recounted how all their possessions were left behind, in order to save their lives, repeatedly stressed that those material objects could be replaced through dint of determination and application. The man or woman from good family who frittered away the opportunities available could bring himself or herself and his/her family to ruin. The poor family whose members applied themselves cooperatively to improving their condition could acquire the respect of their neighbors and pass on further opportunities to their children.

Possibilities of Change

A theme that also kept recurring in response to all the sketches, but most noticeably sketches I, III, IV, VI, VII, and VIII was that the discomfiture or apparent tensions in the scenes were transitory. The isolates would soon "again" participate with the others. The monk would "save" the "hippie" or the "hippie" would soon demonstrate to the monk that he was really a sterling character and either ties of friendship that had existed would reassert themselves, or new bonds would be formed. (Less hope was held out, apparently, for the pair in sketch II, although even here cooler tempers sometimes would prevail.) The existence of deep-seated or long-range hostilities or tensions just did not seem to be contemplated. Whatever problem there was between the individuals was recent, occurring just prior to the scene depicted, and resolved immediately thereafter. In just a very few instances would the resolution of the tension take the form of severing relationships or of physical violence. Even then, usually someone would bring the "offender" once again into the fold.

Mutual Responsibility ("Who Stands Upon a Mountain of Gold, Becomes Golden Himself")

As indicated earlier, someone intercedes to correct, advise, lead, or mislead another. The above phrase is a Tibetan equivalent to "Birds of a feather flock together." Ne'er-do-wells become that way because they fall in with bad companions. On the other hand, the ne'er-do-wells can be set on the correct path once again by the persistent guidance and advice of those who wish them well. *Who* is it that does so wish? In the responses there are children who set their father, or both parents, back on the road of connubial happiness and correct behavior. Some wives manage to save their husbands, but in the instances of the excessively demanding wife, they persisted in their course either incited by a parent or contrary to

their parents' attempt to set them right. In addition to parents and children, there is an occasional sibling who guides the other back on the path. There are instances with an older sister or a brother performing this good deed. In one instance, an "aunt" (the English term was used; the actual relationship is unknown), intercedes with parents on behalf of her errant "nephew" and restores him to the parents' good graces and the correct behavior. There is one instance (from a Moslem Tibetan) of a grandparent exacting a "deathbed vow" from her grandson.

Aside from the occasional reference to a parent's parent taking a hand (and then, at least by inference, for the child's sake), and the solitary "aunt," the individuals bound together by kinship are those who are members of the same "nuclear family," with the modifications common to Tibet. In the majority of instances, the guide, either for good or bad, is a member of the immediate family or has no kin relation whatsoever to the individual. Instead one finds a "friend," "companion," teacher, or a monk. No cousins, no uncles, only the one "aunt" seem to have any interactional role. In one of the life histories, as opposed to the responses, a monk who *is* an uncle does appear. He was the guardian of the young to-be refugee. His nephew's escape was effected by a fellow monk who managed to reunite uncle and nephew in the safety of exile.

One cannot turn automatically to one's relatives for support. Beyond the immediate family they have no responsibility by virtue of kinship. In fact, the life histories frequently point out that the parents advise the children that relatives in more fortunate circumstances *should not* be approached for assistance. One should expect that they will both reject and deplore, or sneer, at such approaches. But there are, obviously, situations in which there are strong affectional ties between various kin. In this sort of situation, the line distinguishing kinsmen from friends is obscure. For that matter, although there are mutual obligations between siblings, they too depend on affectional ties for the degree and the manner in which they are fulfilled.

The Family

The "nuclear family" or "household" presumably functions as a unit, and is subject to observations as such by similar units. "Good families" not only function smoothly and well but they also hold or achieve social approval and respect. Since the view and esteem of the family by the "outside" community is very important, it should conduct its affairs along socially approved lines.

Most highly approved is the image of a family as a harmonious and cooperative enterprise. This harmony and cooperation is supposed to be based on love, respect, and understanding between the spouses (regard-

less of number), between parents and children, and between siblings, whether they be actually full- or half- or step-siblings.

In one response to sketch VI, where a polygynous *Sa-Sum* interpretation was given, the respondent depicted the mother of the small boy as having given him a long-overdue "thrashing." The father, the other "twin-mother," and the half-sister sympathized with the crying child even though he had really been behaving very badly.

Although not restricted to such an arrangement, the "twin-mothers" frequently were sisters who had taken a joint *magpa*, or bridegroom, into their family, just as a fraternal *Sa-Sum* arrangement would result from brothers taking a joint *nama* into their household. In the arrangement for either joint or single *nama* or *magpa* marriage, all parties involved would have to be consulted and consent. (In the instance of the Moslem *magpa* mentioned above, his consent had been extracted by his mother's mother on her death-bed. His father also had been a *magpa*. This respondent's spouse was his mother's sister's orphan daughter.)

Between spouses the mutual love, respect, and understanding ideally would be demonstrated by quiet and "good" talk, or respectful language. Several responses to sketch II made this point. At the same time other respondents indicated that it was not unknown for husbands, or, less often, wives to demonstrate their love and respect in the same manner as the mother above. One interesting aspect of this is that in the cases of the husband "thrashing" his wife his behavior is seen as a "corrective" measure or as a result of sheer exasperation or "human nature." For the wife to resort to the same measures was seen more as a violation of her feminine nature.

Wherever the theme of marital relations came up, there would also be statements to the effect that the partners had to be willing and understanding because there were no binding legal or social sanctions to hold them together if this mortar of their relationship was lacking. Many of the responses to various sketches would include situations of wives leaving husbands, or threatening to do so. In most of these cases, although not all, the husband would attempt to regain or retain his wife but he did not have a high success rate. Usually he had become a wastrel, after falling in with evil companions. Sometimes the wife accused him of neglecting marital responsibilities in favor of being a religious and charitable man or an excessively filial son. Occasionally the wife (with or without her parents' consent) schemed to ruin him and his family. The closest to a husband abandoning his wife is a response where he does not appeal to her to stay.

No response indicated that infidelity, or extramarital relations not connected with generally depraved habits, would lead to separation. One suggested that the cause of what seemed to be a quarrel in sketch II was because one or the other still "thought too much" about a previous partner. There might be an economic requirement that required the

presence of male and female partners, but this obligation could be met by substituting a different partner. Other than the love and respect, the real mortar to the marital union would be the obligation to the children. Even this, however, did not always suffice.

The responses to the individual sketches have already indicated the nature of the parental duty toward their children. They were to provide them with the "good" home and the "good" guidance toward future happiness. This guidance could take the form of harsh physical discipline "for their own good," but preferably it was achieved through example and exhortation. For these purposes, the parents concentrated their attention on the older children. In turn the older children were to help guide their younger siblings. Affection-love again was supposed to be the basis for uniting the siblings and their parents. This love and concern was not along sex lines. Frequently, however, responses would suggest a stronger tie between mother and elder daughter. Younger siblings might conceivably be jealous of the apparent parental preference for the elder ones. But elder siblings would, in turn, lavish attention and concern on the younger. It was assumed that all but one child would move off in their individual directions as they grew older. Even the one might also go away as long as the parents were vigorous enough to manage. Return to the parental household depended upon the nature of the emotional ties developed in childhood, and the nature of the responsibilities associated with the parents' economic and occupational statuses. (In some instances the major landholding obligations passed from mother to daughter, in most instances from father to son. Shops and crafts might follow either line; herding and long-distance trading interests might require males; but this sometimes could be provided through *magpa* and still be transmitted through females.)

If the household included a grandparent, the ideal was that he or she would be retired from subsistence activities. These activities and responsibilities would rest with the young adult unit. The grandparent of either sex would contribute to the cooperative household by taking over the domestic chores, caring for the grandchildren, and cooking for the family. No responses referred to situations which included more than one grandparent, usually the grandfather, in respect to other sketches as well as sketch V.

SEX CHARACTERISTICS AND SEX RELATIONS

"The nature of women is cool, delicate, temperate, patient, wise and forebearing."

"The nature of man is short-tempered, rude, impatient, open to violent means."

"The female Tibetans are descendant of the She-Ogress, the males of Chen-re-zig

in the form of the monkey-ancestor. Hence the impetuous, violent, witch-like nature of women, the calm, judicious, rational nature of men."

"Females are more apt to failure. Men are more able to succeed."

"It is more important to plan for the sons. The females will marry."

"Wives are too demanding. Wives connive and plot to ruin their husbands or their husbands' families."

"Husbands, like other men, are led into gambling, drinking, and narcotics by their companions, or their wives."

"Women are as capable as men if not better at running a business or a household."

"Women are too concerned with immediate ostentation to make good, careful business people."

"Women are as cunning as foxes, hiding vile tempers and mean spirits behind calm and attractive features."

"Men are as cunning as foxes, hiding vile characters and weak spirits behind calm and attractive features."

As one can see from the above, the Tibetans also wage a "war of the sexes." True to form, they do it in their own fashions so that one cannot safely predict the sex of the respondent on the basis of his/her characterization of the characteristics of either sex. Not surprisingly, most of the negative characterizations were applied to the female in sketch II who was being either "unfeminine" or too truly "feminine" in her "passionate" confrontation.

Despite the divergent characterizations, husband and wife are depicted as being equal, and complementary, partners in managing the household and the family. Wives competently look after the needs on the home front whether it be farm, trade, or craft, while husbands go off for long periods of time on trading expeditions. In a polyandrous *Sa-Sum* engaged in trade, the wife kept the accounts while one husband went off and the other either made or handled the stock in the shop. One male informant referred to two very popular traditional dramas in which women ruled kingdoms wisely and well. Some respondents indicated that the position of women in Central Tibet was higher than in their own home regions.

CONCLUSIONS

Just what do these specific and general themes or responses indicate about Tibetan adaptability to the current situations? Again, I stress the fact that even among the "selected" refugees, further selection was involved in determining which individuals would consent to respond. First and most obvious, those refugees who had succumbed to despair, or whose traumatic experiences had resulted in withdrawal, psychosis, or

alcoholism, would not be able to respond. We rely on other evidence that this group actually forms a very small proportion of the exile population. However, individuals who were too suspicious or fearful of being persecuted or used, also might refuse or, more characteristically, fail to participate. Second, although some respondents were found in his mother's Orissan settlement, the majority of my assistant's contacts were present or former students at Mussoorie or other schools, or adults who had established petty enterprises in the locales where the schools are found.

These locales also are of major importance to the Government of India and the Dalai Lama's government since they contain such large concentrations of refugees. Obviously, the awareness of government presence, even if not attributed to the study, could well skew responses in the direction which might seem most likely to win official approval. It would be foolish to totally discount this possibility. However, it has to be viewed in conjunction with the fact that many informants were highly critical and strongly outspoken in their life histories. Largely these criticisms dealt with situations and relationships long past, but many were critical of the current situations and leadership as well. Only His Holiness, the Dalai Lama, was conspicuously exempted.

If the optimism, the determination, and the positive affective tone of most of the responses are not simply "reflections of the official line," the Tibetan refugees who have so far responded seem to retain characteristics that Wallace associates with the second and third stages of the "disaster syndrome" more than a decade after the "disaster." It is impossible for me to prove, but I can hazard a guess that this is not too usual a pattern among exile communities, even where, as among the Nationalist Chinese on Taiwan, they have managed to have an effective government-in-exile, or as among the Cubans in the United States, where the host government has facilitated sizable economic assistance. I suspect that many of the foregoing "general themes" contribute, at least in part, to what can only be called the amazing resilience of this refugee population.

First, the outside world and even many of the Indian-educated Tibetan youths have a view of "unchanging Tibet," mired in "feudal patterns" until the twentieth century caught up with it in the guise of the modern Chinese penetration. Yet, even within this "unchanging" context, change-mutability-impermanence is a constant. A family's standing or fortune may rise or fall, good may turn bad, bad may turn good. The family's members are brought together by the effects of karma and the members will separate just as surely as they met. However, the individuals are not mere "playthings of their fate." They have responsibility to themselves and to those with whom they come in contact to make the most they can out of their most treasured possession, life. Individuals can be guided and can guide others to improve themselves. Lessons and exhortations to mend past errors may be painful, but they can also be

effective. Even the tragedy that swept across their homeland can be and is viewed by many as instructional. It is up to the individuals to profit from such instructions, to eliminate past errors and to develop what is good.

Second, despite the system's limitations, mobility — both physical and social — was a "fact of life," or at least a "fact of lives." This time one might be a male or a female, one's karma might place one in a noble or in a *Dan-yog* family. But these placements are not permanent or eternal. At least, if one had made the most of whatever opportunities were available in this particular life, the situation could be vastly improved next time around. In the course of one life one should try to improve one's children's conditions and bask in the reflected glory. Or, despite one's lowly position there is always an outside chance that the workings of karma might place an incarnation in one's family.

Without depending on the future life, or the future generation, the situation could improve if one could scrape up the free time and the material to set off on a trading venture. Even if the important trade was in the hands of the major traders, the rewards were worth the risk of abandoning one's home and family for long periods of time and traversing dangerous regions. How much more the rewards could be if one combined the quest for material reward with pilgrimage for spiritual rewards. Those who stayed behind still traveled vicariously, because the returned traveler would tell of the experiences he had had and the wonders he had seen. The trip might be to a town only a few days' journey from home, or it could be to that vast country called India with its crowded cities like Calcutta and its very different people.

These seem to form some of the important, but often overlooked, parameters of the cognitive structures of many of the refugees. If this be, in fact, the case, then despite the very reality of the disaster which precipitated their flight, and the sufferings that accompanied and followed it, one must suspect that many of them were amazingly well prepared by their own perceptual schemes to cope with the situation in which they found themselves.

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Ethnogenesis and Resource Competition among Tibetan Refugees in South India: A New Face to the Indo-Tibetan Interface

MELVYN C. GOLDSTEIN

Although ethnicity has become one of the most actively studied problem areas in contemporary anthropology, there has been little research on the dynamics of ethnogenesis. This paper examines this process in reference to Tibetan refugee populations who have been settled in an agricultural scheme located in the state of Mysore. The position taken here is that the competition for resources that exists among these refugee populations, and between them and the Indian population, is one of the critical factors underlying the development of ethnic boundaries now operative both within and outside of the Tibetan community.

BACKGROUND

Throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries a permanent Tibetan minority came into existence in India. Darjeeling, Kalimpong, Ladakh, Lahul, and areas of the North East Frontier Agency such as Tawang were incorporated, together with their indigenous populations, into British India. All of these populations, however, were absorbed as parts of territorial units with ongoing social and cultural systems and as such posed no great problem to the Government of India (GOI), which adopted a laissez faire attitude toward them.

Beginning in 1959, however, a dramatic new factor emerged. In that year, as a result of internal disturbances in Chinese-controlled Tibet, the

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Dalai Lama together with many members of his government fled to India and the other Himalayan border states. Unlike the earlier instances of incorporation, these Tibetans were not part of intact territorial and sociocultural systems. They were an uprooted population and as such presented an immediate problem to the GOI with respect to their subsistence and housing. There could be no laissez faire attitude with respect to these helpless Tibetans, and most of the refugees were initially organized into transit camps. Today there are about 100,000 Tibetan refugees of whom 70,000 to 80,000 reside permanently in India.

The normally grim plight of refugee populations is greatly exacerbated when the refugees manifest either, or both, of the following characteristics: (1) a cultural tradition alien to that of the host country, and (2) a lack of special technological skills compatible with the labor needs of the host country.

If, following Goodenough (1970:99), we take culture to be a "set of standards for perceiving, believing, evaluating, communicating and acting," then the impact of the first factor is self-evident. A refugee in a totally alien cultural matrix is like a person wearing the wrong glasses. His perceptions and evaluations of life around him, his norms for behavior, and his standards for communication are no longer efficacious. The myriad cues and clues that subtly mediate interpersonal interaction now distort and produce confusion and conflict. When, added to this, refugees do not possess special technological skills, their prospects for successful rehabilitation are very slim indeed. It is not surprising, therefore, to find that the term "refugee" connotes a spectrum of dysfunctional, socially pathological traits such as homicide, suicide, alcoholism, and insanity. Unfortunately, all too often this stereotype is an accurate representation of the reality of the situation.

The Tibetans who entered India in 1959 possessed both debilitating characteristics. With the exception of a handful (mainly aristocrats) who spoke some English and/or Hindi, the refugees spoke only Tibetan. Meat-eating Buddhists from the cold climate of the Tibetan plateau, they found themselves thrust into the sweltering heat of vegetarian Hindu India. The refugees were nomads, monks, farmers, and petty traders, none of which occupations, on the surface, offered any competitive advantages in India. Almost all had no familiarity with modern industrial technology.

The obstacles facing the Tibetans were not just external ones. They came from widely disparate regions in Tibet where they spoke mutually unintelligible dialects, operated under different sociopolitical systems, and were traditionally hostile. Not only could Tibetans not communicate and interact freely with the Indians around them; in many instances they were hard pressed to do so among themselves.

Tibetans, therefore, entered India, a land already overburdened with

massive poverty and unemployment, without language facility, without knowledge or understanding of Indian social and cultural systems, and without any potentially useful occupational skills. Their future looked anything but bright. But in point of fact, their initial adaptation to life in India has been very successful. The stereotyped refugee syndrome did not develop among Tibetans, and segments of the refugees have been very successfully rehabilitated, the most successful of the rehabilitation programs being the permanent agricultural settlement. The retention of traditional Tibetan sociocultural patterns in an unabashedly pluralistic adaptation stems from the interplay between traditional structures and new requirements. In particular, the retention of traditional patterns of political hierarchy and authority has afforded Tibetans tremendous competitive advantages in exploiting their new niche.

REHABILITATION

Before discussing the rehabilitation project, however, let me make a brief comment about the Dalai Lama and his "government" (DLG), and the policy of the GOI toward it and Tibetans in general. From the beginning the Dalai Lama and his officials interceded with the GOI on behalf of the Tibetan refugees. They immediately set themselves up as spokesmen for the mass of disparate refugees and even maintained offices in the transit camps. The GOI accepted this and was prepared to work with the Dalai Lama's staff, although only within clearly delimited parameters.

The GOI clearly did not want to recognize the Dalai Lama's organization as a *de jure* "government-in-exile." Even after the 1962 Chinese invasion of India, when the status and authority of the Dalai Lama's "government" soared, the GOI assiduously refused to accord it formal governmental status. In a similar vein the GOI also refused to resettle all Tibetans in one area in North India as the DLG had suggested. What is important to note, however, is that within these parameters the GOI adopted a very liberal attitude toward the administration of the Tibetans.

The GOI early made the fundamental decision to partake actively in efforts to rehabilitate the refugees. The next step obviously was to establish the ideological framework within which such rehabilitation should occur. If we view the options open to it as a continuum running between the two poles of assimilation and pluralism, the GOI clearly opted for a policy that fell toward the "plural" end of the continuum. From the beginning, the policies of the GOI were not intended to discourage or destroy Tibetan cultural institutions and traditions. Working together with the DLG and a variety of foreign aid groups, the GOI launched a program of rehabilitation within a framework compatible with the maintenance of Tibetan culture.

The most successful of the rehabilitation strategies called for the creation of a series of permanent agricultural settlements throughout India. The idea was to resettle Tibetans then living in transit camps or working on road repair gangs and to provide them with assistance and resources so that within a period of five years they could become economically self-sufficient. This, if successful, would not only permanently take care of the refugee population, but it would also help India's food needs by bringing unused land under cultivation. However, considering the immense difficulty governments and agencies normally encounter in resettling populations even intraculturally, this goal for Tibetans in India was certainly one of Herculean proportions.

Although the GOI would not bring all Tibetans together into one area, it also did not want to scatter them in small family units (as, for example, the Canadian government is doing with their Tibetans). The proposed settlements were a kind of compromise, because their envisioned size of three to four thousand was large enough to sustain Tibetan language and other institutions easily.

The GOI further facilitated this cultural preservation by allowing Tibetans considerable internal autonomy and, in particular, by permitting the DLG to exercise administrative control over the settlements. This does not mean that the GOI abdicated its authority over the Tibetans, for it did not. Rather it means that the GOI (and the state government) had no objection to giving the DLG *de facto* internal administrative control of the camps and to working with the DLG instead of with the individual refugees, so long as the latter did not object. From the beginning, then, two critical aspects of the GOI's policy toward the Tibetan refugees were (1) the liberal "nonassimilative" framework; and (2) the broad "delegated" authority of the Tibetan leadership headed by Tibet's former ruler, the Dalai Lama.

The first of the rehabilitation agricultural settlements was located in the state of Mysore on forest land which in the past had sustained agriculture. The land itself was donated on a ninety-nine year lease by the state government of Mysore under whose jurisdiction and authority the settlement fell. In the early summer of 1961, after the trees had been cut and removed, the first Tibetan settlers arrived in Mysore to start the work of building the agricultural community. This settlement, the first of its kind in India, is called Mundakuppe.[1]

The plan for Mundakuppe called for the development in stages, over a period of several years, of a settlement consisting of 3,000 acres. This land was to be allocated on the basis of one acre per person so that, in the end, the settlement would hold around 3,000 Tibetans. Internally, Mundakuppe was to be divided into six camps, each of which would hold 500

[1] This is a pseudonym.

acres. The refugees who came down to Mysore in 1961 formed Camps One and Two.

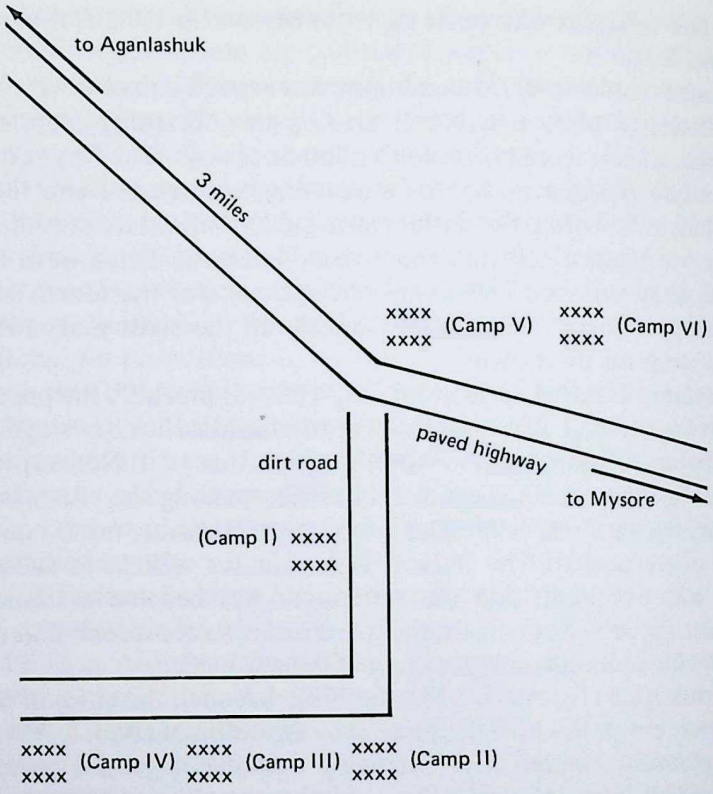
As mentioned earlier, Mundakuppe was expected to achieve economic self-sufficiency after five years. During the "learning-experimental" years, the settlers were assisted in a number of ways. The first and second years, when permanent houses were being constructed and the fields cleared for cultivation, the settlers were paid a daily salary in addition to a regular food ration. By the third year, when the fields were initially planted, they received half-wages and rations. For the fourth and fifth years they received only quarter-rations. In the sixth year, 1966, the settlers were on their own.

I arrived in Mundakuppe in January 1966, at precisely the point when the first two camps were entering the total self-sufficiency stage. There would be no subsidies for the crop they grew that year. Not surprisingly, that spring there was a great deal of anxiety among the villagers as the time for sowing drew near. These anxieties, however, turned out to be totally unwarranted. The harvest that year (as well as in subsequent years) was excellent, and the settlement has become a tremendous economic success. Let us turn, then, and examine the technomaterialistic basis of the economic adaptation at Mundakuppe.

Mundakuppe is located in Mysore State between the cities of Mysore and Arracrem. It lies on a flat plain at an elevation of about 2,700 feet. It has a pleasant climate with relatively cool evenings and an average rainfall of about thirty-five inches, an amount sufficient to support only one crop a year.

The settlement is spread out on two sides of a paved motor highway (see Map 1) which has regular bus service. The four camps south of the highway (Camps I–IV) are separated from neighboring Indian villages by stretches of forest, but the land to the north of the road (Camps V and VI) is contiguous on the east with the fields of local Indians. There is a small town (Aganlashuk) of several thousand people about three miles northeast of the settlement on the main highway. At the point where the camp's dirt road intersects with the motor highway, a small trade/administrative complex, consisting of the offices and living quarters of the state officials and a variety of Indian shops and restaurants has developed.

The settlement itself is divided into six camps, each consisting of 500 acres of farm land and roughly the same number of Tibetans. Each camp has a nucleated residential complex of 100 tile-roofed houses around which the fields are arranged. Although the arable land was internally allocated on an individual basis to all Tibetans over the age of four, the basic jural unit in the settlement is a "household." Each household consists of five landholding persons who legally share one house. The household also possesses a number of agricultural tools as well as one draft animal for plowing. Because it is rare for a "real" family to coincide



with the "legal" family, one house often contains two or more different and, not uncommonly, unrelated families. Neither the land nor the implements a person/household has can be sold. Furthermore, the land cannot be transmitted to one's heirs. Upon death, the land reverts back to the settlement.

The settlers of Mundakuppe were recruited and selected by the DLG from transit and road gang camps in North India. Almost all the main regional/subcultural groupings and social strata in Tibet are represented in the settlement. There are former "taxpayers" serfs, *dŭjung* serfs, traders, servants, craftsmen, monks, and various types of "unclean" castes. Although many of the settlers in Camp One have had previous agricultural experience in Tibet, this is not generally the case, and taking the settlement as a whole, the majority of settlers have had no prior farming experience.

The local staple crop is a variety of millet called *ragi*. Although Tibetans much prefer barley or wheat as food, because these cannot grow in Mysore, they have grudgingly adopted *ragi* as their main food crop. The technology associated with *ragi* cultivation, including the somewhat difficult transplanting process, was readily learned.

Aside from its taste, the main shortcoming of *ragi* is its relatively low yield potential. On the average, *ragi* yields only about 600 kilograms per acre and rarely exceeds 1,000 kilograms per acre. Since *ragi* sold (in 1966/1967) for about 70 cents (*naya paise*) per kilogram, the gross monetary return per acre (using the 600 kilogram yield figure) comes to about 420 rupees.

Because of this low potential, various "experts" advised the cultivation of a more lucrative cash crop. Cotton and tobacco were tried but problems in procurement of seed and marketing led to their discontinuance. In 1966, a technical advisor recommended hybrid maize as an ideal crop. Although this idea met with considerable opposition from the settlers who remembered their previous experiences with cotton and tobacco and who were apprehensive about the large cash outlay maize requires for fertilizer, some were finally persuaded to plant maize and these were rewarded with a bumper crop. Since then maize accounts for about half of the acreage under cultivation.

Maize yields are much higher than those of *ragi*. Two thousand kilograms per acre is not unusual and the yields can run up to 3,000 kilograms per acre. If we take 1,600 kilograms per acre and 60 cents (*naya paise*) as the average yield and selling price, the gross monetary value of one acre of maize is about 960 rupees. After deducting the approximately 250 rupees paid per acre for fertilizer, seed, etc., the net yield of 700 rupees is still higher than even the gross figure for *ragi*. Maize is clearly a more lucrative crop.

We can get an idea of the relationship between this agricultural base and consumption requirements by looking at what the situation would be for a hypothetical family of three (with three acres). If they planted half maize and half *ragi*, their yield (taking the averages cited above) would be 2,400 kilograms of maize and 900 kilograms of *ragi*. If they ate grain three times a day they would consume about 750 kilograms in a year (about 2 kilograms per day). Since Tibetans do not normally use maize flour, this would leave from the *ragi* yield about 150 kilograms. In addition to their grain needs, such a family would spend about 50 rupees a month (600 a year) on other foodstuffs such as oil, butter, milk, cigarettes, etc. Subtracting this from the 1,050 rupees the maize yield converts to, the net cash remainder is 450 rupees. When the remaining 150 kilograms of *ragi* is similarly converted to a cash figure, the total profit for the three acres would be around 550 rupees.

Evidence from consumption patterns and standard of living bears out the contention that the settlement has been economically successful. In the period 1965–1967, there was a marked increase in consumption of what, in the settlement context, can be considered luxury items. Many of the Tibetan families who shared houses with other families moved out to their fields where they built new residences from their own funds. Those

who had already moved to the fields made improvements such as replacing thatched roofs with tile roofs. There was considerable investment in new furniture and household possessions. Bicycles, and even some horses, became more and more common among the villagers. Gambling ("ma jong" and Tibetan dice) reemerged although it had been initially banned. Furthermore, there was a tremendous increase in the use of Indian manual labor in the fields. In spring and fall literally scores of Indians came daily to the camp seeking day-wage farm employment from Tibetans. A number of more affluent Tibetans were beginning to develop permanent employer/employee relations with particular Indians. Similarly, in 1967 it was becoming more common for impoverished young Indian boys to be taken in by Tibetan families. In return for room and board these Indian youths would do a variety of household tasks such as hauling drinking water from the wells. Another index of relative affluence can be seen in the way Mundakuppe has become a regular route for numerous Indian beggars, some of whom have gone so far as to learn to chant Tibetan prayers in Tibetan.

Mundakuppe's economic success has involved a delicate blending of traditional technology and customs with the increasingly effective utilization of modern agro-business technology. For example, on the traditional side, one type of plowing is done much as it was in Tibet with two-animal draft teams pulling a traditional type plow. Similarly, Tibetan methods of winnowing and threshing have been retained as have agricultural customs such as work songs. On certain days an observer would be hard pressed to know he was really in India and not in Tibet or some Himalayan kingdom.

On the other hand, Tibetans have been very open to change and have adopted a variety of both local Indian techniques and modern agricultural technology. The settlement has a cooperative society that has fourteen tractors and four trucks (run and maintained by Tibetans) and uses sophisticated hybrid maize seeds, different types of chemical fertilizers, and insecticides. The land has been contour bunded and there has been considerable devlopment of tractor plowing by contours rather than by household holdings. There are several rat-proof grain warehouses which are used to maximize marketing profit. For example, one year the cooperative society took a 300,000 rupee loan from a bank to buy grain from the settlers at harvest time to be held until later in the year when the price would rise. Part of the profit difference was then redistributed among the farmers.

Economic self-sufficiency, however, is not the only criterion of successful resettlement and rehabilitation. Equally important are the cultural and psychological dimensions. In Mundakuppe, the continuity and vitality of Tibetan culture has been very successfully maintained. The Tibetan language is universally used in the settlement and all children learn not only Tibetan history and religion but also how to read and write the

Tibetan language at a high level of proficiency. Similarly, Tibetan religion flourishes. Monks, lamas, and shamans function, and there are several temples and monasteries. Religious rites and ceremonies are regularly performed, and the values and world view underlying the system are firmly accepted. Tibetan "national" identity is in many ways stronger and more explicit than it ever was in Tibet and there is tremendous pride in Tibetan culture and religion, as well as in the achievements of Mundakuppe. Tibetans feel no sense of inferiority vis-à-vis the Indians around them.

There is also very little manifestation of the dysfunctional behavior commonly associated with the "refugee" syndrome. There is little incidence of mental and emotional disorders and no incidence of alcoholism. Crimes of property are few and occur within normal distribution parameters. Even though most of the Tibetans now realize it is not likely they will return to Tibet in their lives, the overall attitude of the people is positive.

This cultural adaptation has taken place along three lines. One of the most important of these has been the development of standards for intracultural interaction between Tibetans from the many diverse subcultural areas present in the settlement. Mundakuppe is a classic example of ethnic boundaries existing within ethnic boundaries. A kind of segmentary ethnicity has emerged. Within the Tibetan community, the major subcultural ethnic groups such as Khampas are clearly maintaining their identity vis-à-vis the other Tibetan groups although standards for intracultural (Tibetan) interaction have developed. For example, Lhasa Tibetan has come to be used as a *lingua franca* in the camp.

The second and equally important line of change has been the accommodation of traditional Tibetan political and social patterns to the democratic laws and institutions operative in India. For example, the DLG has written a constitution which, among other things, incorporates intraethnic (Tibetan) elections.

The third factor concerns Indo-Tibetan interaction. It is the least important of the three because Tibetan interaction with Indians has been restricted to fleeting encounters in the market place and sporadic contact in employer/employee situations where the Tibetans are in the dominant positions. There has been no interethnic development of personal or intimate relations, and marriage has been characterized by endogamy.

Space again precludes further discussion of these adaptations. In summary, however, the initial adaptation process in Mysore can be characterized as pervasive pluralism. Tibetan culture and identity have been conspicuously maintained and interethnic contact is almost completely limited to economic spheres. There has been virtually no assimilation to Indian cultural and social institutions. Concomitantly, there has been the impressive economic adaptation which combines traditional and modern

agro-business techniques to exploit successfully the energy potential of a traditional niche. The economic success of the Tibetans is one of the most striking accomplishments of the program.

But what of the local Indian attitude to all this? Aliens are brought to their area and equipped with modern mechanized technology not available to them. These aliens not only become economically well-off, but vigorously maintain their strange and alien cultural traditions. On the surface, this seems a fertile matrix for interethnic resentment, hostility, and conflict.

Whether or not there are strong feelings of resentment among local Indians is difficult to determine but, if so, it has not assumed behavioral significance. There have been few overt manifestations of hostility and conflict. Tibetans have generally had distant but cordial relations with local Indians and certainly do not feel unwelcomed or mistreated in the local area. The Tibetans, whose settlement has four stores run by their own cooperative society, regularly attend the weekly Indian market and go to the local Indian town. On any given day they can be seen shopping and going about their business in town. Because most of the older Tibetans know no Kannada, several of the Indian shopkeepers have actually learned a few words of Tibetan to facilitate business. Relations with the state government of Mysore have been very close, and the Mysore government has shown an amazing capacity to understand and support the Tibetan population in Mundakuppe (and the other locations where Tibetans have been placed in Mysore). Local Tibetans genuinely have positive attitudes toward the Mysore government and India in general, and a number indicated that they would prefer to remain in Mysore rather than return to Tibet as it was under the old system (serfdom). All, however, would return under the new system.

How, then, do we account, on the one hand, for the economic, cultural, and psychological achievements of Tibetans in Mundakuppe and, on the other hand, for the absence of hostility and conflict between the Tibetans and the local Indians? Although a variety of factors, such as the policy of the GOI and the availability of resources, are relevant to this question, one factor — the internal political organization of the refugees — stands out as basic. In the new social and physical environment of India, the preservation of certain traditional Tibetan cultural patterns immediately offered the refugees competitive advantages. I contend that, in particular, the traditional Tibetan political structure possesses a high "adaptive capacity" and is the single most important variable underlying the successful initial adaptation of the Tibetans. Let us, therefore, examine briefly aspects of both the traditional and the new (emergent) political structures.

The most important politico-economic institution in Tibet was serfdom. Except for a few hundred families of lords and religious corporate

institutions, the remainder of the lay Tibetan population were serfs (*mi-ser*) of one sort or another, and these serf statuses were basically ascribed, that is, recruitment occurred automatically at birth through parallel descent lines. Serfs owed substantial service obligations to their lords who, in turn, were obligated to protect and provide subsistence for the serfs, this subsistence generally taking the form of arable land.

As in feudal Europe, the most important politico-economic resource was the manorial estate. Such estates were based on serf labor and were divided into a demesne section which the serfs worked as a corvée obligation and a testamentary section which consisted of the land the lord allocated to the serfs for their subsistence. Under this system the serfs were tied to the estate (i.e., they could not unilaterally and legally leave the estate) and they provided all the labor for the cultivation of the lord's demesne fields.

Estates were administered by stewards appointed for varying terms by the lord. These stewards were not local serfs but rather were selected from the household-administrative serf staff of the lord. Their main function was the overall administration of the lord's land to maintain a continual flow of products from the estate to the lord (in Lhasa). Under this general mandate the steward organized agricultural activities on the lord's demesne land, collected taxes, and intervened in any affairs (e.g., disputes) he felt might directly or indirectly affect the flow of goods. He was also the channel through which communication between the lord and the serfs took place and in some ways represented their individual and collective needs to the lord.

Among the serfs, however, we find an egalitarian structure. Within any given stratum of serfs each serf was the jural equal of all others, and competitive individualism pervaded the serf interactional system within a status. Although cooperative work and planning ocurred under the authority of the steward, voluntary cooperation between the serfs was unusual.

Tibet, however, was characterized not only by a degree of feudallike decentralization but also by centralization. The Tibetan political system can be described as a type of centralized feudal state. There was a central government headed by the Dalai Lama and administered by a bureaucracy consisting of an aristocratic and monastic official elite who ruled through a provincial administrative system comprising over 100 district units. In each district, the central government posted one or two of its officials for terms usually of three years. Like the estate stewards, these district officials were primarily interested in maintaining the flow of goods and services that were owed the government from tax obligations. These officials, however, also adjudicated disputes, punished criminals, and represented the interests of the district to the central government. This government was the final source for adjudication and claimed ulti-

mate rights over all land in Tibet. It alone could initiate national policy, and it alone maintained an army. Suffice it to say that, although the exact parameters of any particular lord's authority varied, the central government was clearly paramount.

The central government was clearly dominated by religious orientations and personnel. The ruler, the Dalai Lama, was a bodhisattva who Tibetans believe has renounced his own nirvana to help all sentient creatures in general, and Tibetans in particular, to achieve final enlightenment. Furthermore, the regents who ruled in the Dalai Lama's infancy were also high incarnate lamas, and half of the governmental bureaucracy were monk officials recruited from the great Gelugpa monasteries around Lhasa. The overall orientation of the state, if there was one, was to promote the development of religion in Tibet. It was to provide a matrix conducive to the practice of religion. The entire governmental structure was thus intertwined with religion and its very legitimacy depended to a large extent on it.[2]

It was from this type of social system that Tibetans entered India by the thousands in 1959. From the beginning, as was indicated earlier, the old Tibetan government interceded with the GOI on behalf of Tibetans and succeeded in obtaining its consent to organize the refugees. Mundakuppe stands as one of the positive consequences of this entente between the Dalai Lama and the GOI.

In contrast to the traditional Tibetan social system, the new system in Mundakuppe emphasized equality. All traditional ascribed differences have been legally eliminated. All the settlers have one acre of non-hereditary land whether they were beggars or wealthy traders in Tibet. Although former status differences continue to be recognized by some, and although notions of pollution persist, the jural and economic forces that supported these have been completely eliminated. These changes have been actively supported by the Dalai Lama and his government.

This democratic equality, however, is, overlaid with political patterns of authority and hierarchy characteristic of the traditional Tibetan political system. There are no longer serfs and lords, and there are elections in the camp, but there is also paternalistic hierarchical rule.

As was described earlier, the settlement is divided into six camps, each consisting of 500 acres and 500 persons. The administrative hierarchy in the settlement consists of four levels of officials. The lowest level is the *cugpon* (*bcu dpon*)[3] or "head of ten." As his name implies, he represents ten households (fifty persons) and is concerned mainly with organizing labor "tax" obligations. These officials are elected annually, and there are ten in each camp.

[2] For a more detailed discussion of the traditional Tibetan social system, see Goldstein (1971a, b, c, d, 1973).

[3] The transliteration system used here follows that described by T. V. Wylie (1959).

A more important official is the *ch mi* (*spyi mi*) or "general leader." Each camp has two such officials who are elected on an annual basis. They receive a salary of 60 rupees a month which was initially collected from the residents of the camp but was later paid by the Cooperative Society.

Finally, there are the three *gardu* (*sgar 'thus*). These officials represent the three major ethnic subcultural areas: central Tibet (*dbus gtsang*), eastern Tibet (*khams* or *mdo smad*) and northeastern Tibet (*amdo* or *mdo stod*). They are elected for three-year terms and receive a monthly salary of 100 rupees from the DLG.

Above these positions are the appointees of the DLG. Chief among these is the camp leader. Unlike the lower camp officials, he is not a settler (has no land) and is not elected. He is, rather, an official of the DLG who was appointed by it to head the settlement. The camp leader during the time I was there was, in fact, a former monk official in the traditional Tibetan government. The camp leader heads an office called *döncö leygung* (*don gcod las khungs*) which contains a number of subordinate employees, such as an English interpreter and a Tibetan secretary. It is considered a part of the DLG[4] which pays the salary of the officials. These officials are also not settlers but rather members of the DLG. Parallel but subordinate to the bureau office is the Cooperative Society. It also is headed by an official of the DLG who is under the camp leader and works hand-in-hand with him.

The camp leader is in charge of the overall administration of the settlement. Appointed by the DLG, he represents the needs of the settlers as a corporate collectivity to both the DLG and the Indian and foreign sectors. He and his staff plan and implement policy for the settlement with respect not only to technical, agricultural, and marketing matters but also to sociocultural ones. For example, the use of beef and the playing of gambling games (dice and "big ma jong") have been forbidden in the settlement. Internally, the camp leader attempts to integrate and articulate the various diverse subcultural units and to present to them the policies and views of the DLG. He also plays an important role in maintaining peace by using the prestige of his office to mediate disputes and altercations. Moreover, he often acts on behalf of individuals in their dealings with Indian legal and political officials. In many ways, then, although the differences are as important as the similarities, the camp leader plays a role analogous to that of the district commissioner or estate steward in Tibet, and Mundakuppe resembles in some ways the type of estate in Tibet where the serfs (*düjung*) held only small plots of land for their lifetime. This resemblance has not been lost on the settlers who jokingly refer to the rare settlement labor obligations (e.g., mending fences) by the name used for corvée taxes (*ula*) in Tibet. Similarly, the

[4] It is formally titled The Office of the Representative of His Holiness the Dalai Lama.

kinship patterns that have emerged in Mundakuppe follow those manifested by this type of serf in Tibet.

Mundakuppe is certainly not a feudal estate, and the Tibetan settlers living there are not serfs, but the continuity in the type of hierarchical, appointive administrative leadership is striking. Although there has been a genuine democratization of many traditional Tibetan institutions, particularly with respect to land tenure, the camp leader's position represents a clear continuity with traditional Tibetan superordinate authority statuses.

As many anthropologists have pointed out in recent years, the retention of traditional sociocultural patterns in new environments is a function of the advantages they yield. Traditional sociocultural systems have different adaptive capacities in their new contexts and the manner and degree in which they are maintained depend on the competitive advantages they provide their adherents. With respect to Tibetan refugees in the initial phases of contact, the Dalai Lama and his officials offered indisputable competitive advantages.

The Dalai Lama was an internationally known religio-political leader whose flight to India had drawn worldwide attention to the Tibetan situation. His exalted stature permitted him to negotiate with the GOI from a position of relative strength and facilitated the development of widespread lines of communication with numerous private and governmental personages and agencies both in India and abroad. Moreover, the ready availability of a core of highly experienced and competent governmental administrators provided the Tibetans a ready-made organization through which resources could be effectively aggregated and policy decided on and implemented. The DLG was able to monitor and coordinate activities and needs of Tibetan refugees all over India, as well as in Sikkim, Bhutan, and Nepal. The DLG offered the scattered Tibetan refugees a centralized and efficient organization that could integrate and represent their needs. This it has certainly done.

The very existence of a settlement in Mysore is an excellent example of this. The DLG, in conjunction with the GOI and various foreign aid agencies, developed the idea of resettling Tibetans permanently throughout India and worked out the specific details with respect to size, area, economic resources, etc. The DLG, furthermore, was responsible for implementing this policy within the Tibetan community. It convinced Tibetans to go to Mysore, an area which from North India seemed the end of the world. It also sent its officials to Mundakuppe in advance of the settlers and from the beginning organized activities internally and coordinated interaction with the Mysore and national governments. As needs and problems emerged, it was the representatives of the DLG who intervened and negotiated at length on whatever level was necessary. Given the traditional intrastratum individualism of Tibetan peasants, it is

inconceivable that they could have so rapidly and effectively developed a leadership structure like that of the DLG. For example, even the DLG failed abysmally when they attempted in 1964 to institute communal (cooperative) labor in Mundakuppe. No one wanted to work for "the others."

However, unlike the old system, in Mundakuppe the settlers do not hold their land on the basis of tax and corvée obligations to a lord or the Tibetan government. Rather, each settler holds his acre from the GOI (and the Mysore state government) for the duration of his life regardless of whether he complies with the commands or decisions of the camp leader (or the DLG). This is the paradox of Mundakuppe. While on the surface there is political continuity in the form of a centralized hierarchical authority, in reality the hierarchical authority is extremely precarious.

The DLG found, and finds itself today, in the unenviable position of having no legal or constitutional status with respect to Indian law, and consequently it is not able to use coercive force to compel acquiescence with its policies. Its continued operation as a government depends completely on the voluntary compliance of the refugees, which, in turn, depends on the refugees' perceived self-interests and on their belief in the legitimacy of the DLG. But, even in the initial stages of the refugee situation, the latter was not completely unproblematic because significant numbers of refugees either had not been traditionally under the political authority of the DLG or had only recently come under it. It comes as no surprise, then, to find that the DLG has consistently and energetically attempted to reinforce these two general factors. The attempts of the DLG, however, are in large part responsible for the pluralistic character of the Tibetans' adaptation. It is my contention that the needs of the DLG in its new setting have produced policies that have been a powerful force for maintaining the initial ethnic differences and generating new ones. Let us first examine the self-interest variable.

The DLG actively attempted to aggregate relief funds for the refugees. It maintains offices not only in New Delhi but also in Geneva (where many of the relief agencies have headquarters) and New York City. It also publishes and distributes an English language newsletter throughout the world. Through its amazing intra-Indian and international organizational network, it has access to those in control of funds, and it has been very successful in convincing them to recognize and deal with it as the legitimate leadership structure of the Tibetans. With two minor exceptions, dissident groups of Tibetans have had little success in obtaining funds.

The DLG is also an important source of employment. It hires (for itself and foreign sponsored projects) numerous Tibetans in various roles. It has maintained the traditional prestigious titles and honorifics of government service but has opened service up to all strata. Thus, one of the

present council ministers was formerly a serf of one of the former council ministers. The DLG also, to a large extent, monopolizes access to educational scholarships both in India and abroad.

In Mundakuppe this same pattern exists. In addition to the existence of the camp itself, the office of the Dalai Lama (the camp leader) has managed in a few short years to procure for the settlers tractors, trucks, scarce hybrid seeds, chemical fertilizers, a medical clinic, electricity (in 1968–1969), grinding mills, and so forth. The DLG has literally delivered the goods to its constituency.

But while efforts to sustain old and discover new sources of aid continue, it is the ideological dimension that lies at the heart of the dynamics of the adaptation of Tibetans to India. The strategy of the DLG in this respect has taken several directions, all of which are oriented to maintaining cultural and social relational boundaries. The DLG has actively sought to maintain Tibetan social and cultural patterns and has fostered a rigidly bounded plural adaptation for Tibetans.

The ideological policies of the DLG can be analytically separated into three main dimensions:

1. The development of an intense feeling of Tibetan cultural and political nationalism among Tibetans;
2. The maintenance and expansion of the charisma and stature of the Dalai Lama; and
3. The fostering of social, political, and economic boundaries.

Nationalism is a rather new phenomenon for Tibetans. For centuries in Tibet the relevant variable was not that of Tibet versus other national entities but rather that of subcultural segments in conflict and opposition. A good example of this is the term used for Tibet itself: *bod pa*. Actually, this term, even in 1959, was used by eastern Tibetans to refer only to central Tibetans. They considered themselves *khams pa* (eastern Tibetans) rather than *bod pa*, and many of them actively sought to remain, or become, independent of the Tibetan (Dalai Lama's) government. Among the Tibetans who arrived in India in 1959, the idea of a Tibetan national identity was very poorly developed.

One factor immediately altering this state of affairs was the vivid realization of the fundamental similarities shared by all Tibetans that came as the result of their sudden immersion into the midst of a sea of Indians. The vast sociocultural distances initially felt to exist between the various Tibetan subcultural groups were significantly diminished, and this new awareness became an important foundation for the DLG's vigorous advocation of a Tibetan "national" (ethnic and political) identity.

Through its publications, such as the daily newspaper and the monthly newsmagazine, and through its control of the teaching staff and educational materials used in the Tibetan section of the school system, the DLG

has effectively promoted the idea of a Tibetan nation and people, particularly among the young. Day in and day out this idea is expressed in the media and schools. Pride in one's language, customs, religious institutions, one's "modernized" government, and of course, in His Holiness, the Dalai Lama, are constant themes.

A new national anthem has been created which is sung daily in the schools and at public meetings. A new national holiday (March 10) commemorating the uprising of the Tibetan people against the Chinese in 1959 has also played an important part in mobilizing national sentiments. This March 10 holiday has been observed through various kinds of political demonstrations, some confined to the Tibetan settlements but many involving local Indian communities. Competition has developed between the various Tibetan communities as to which can produce the best celebration program, and this has been encouraged by the DLG which publishes detailed reports from each settlement on their activities. The scope of some of these celebrations is surprising. For example, in 1967 in Mundakuppe, the camp leader organized a massive truck demonstration for Mysore City. Fourteen open-topped trucks were rented and decorated with political slogans and statements. Handbills explaining in English the significance of the holiday were printed, and tapes reading the explanation were made in English, Kannada, Urdu, and Tibetan. Hundreds of Tibetans were loaded into the trucks and given the handbills to distribute while the tapes blared out the message through a portable public address system attached to the camp leader's car (which led the procession). For several hours these trucks drove throughout the city of Mysore, even stopping in front of the local Communist Party office. It was a great success and the Tibetans were received sympathetically by the local Indians. Although it was turning dark when the trucks returned to the settlement, the Tibetans who had to stay behind lined the settlement road and gave the participants a hero's welcome. It was a moving and uniting experience for the settlers.

A related theme is that of "returning to the homeland." Although the DLG has advocated making the best of life in India, it has also vigorously maintained the position that there is hope of returning. The office of the DLG in New York has acted as a liaison with the United Nations and there have been repeated attempts to bring the Tibetan question before that body. The various resolutions on human self-determination have been proclaimed by the Tibetan media as steps on the road of return to their country. The Tibetan media have given detailed, if not always accurate, coverage to the United Nations activities related to the Tibetan question.

Similarly, there has been a constant effort in the media to retain the idea of an overriding Tibetan nation by keeping before the people the plight of the Tibetan "brethren" left behind. There has been a steady diet

of "eyewitness" accounts of the situation in Tibet by recent refugees; all having the theme of how lucky the refugees are in India and how the downtrodden brothers left in Tibet still believe in the Dalai Lama and earnestly desire a free Tibet, headed by the Dalai Lama. Concomitantly, the Tibetan media continually expound on how the Chinese Communists are trying to eradicate the Tibetan race in Tibet. It is, therefore, the duty of the refugees, led by the Dalai Lama and his government, to maintain the greatness and vitality of the Tibetan race and national culture.[5]

Underlying these perspectives is the theme of *rgyal zhen* or patriotism to the Tibetan cause. Support and compliance with the DLG is considered patriotic, whereas opposition and disagreement is considered traitorous because it allegedly harms the "Tibetan cause." The refugees have been continually exhorted in the media to exhibit true patriotism for Tibet (i.e., the DLG).

Another dimension of the development of a dynamic national consciousness has been the fostering of pride in selected Tibetan cultural traditions and a concerted attempt to maintain these in the alien sociocultural matrix. Obviously, however, not all traditional cultural paraphernalia are compatible with the new "system" within whose parameters the DLG must act. For example, serfdom has no place in the "classless and casteless" ideology of the GOI. This feature of Tibetan society has been treated as a disgrace and is discussed with outsiders only with reticence. The attitude of Tibetan leaders and even peasants is that it is best forgotten.

This reticence instantly vanishes, however, when the conversation turns to Tibetan religion, for it is this that all Tibetans hold up as the epitome of Tibetan cultural brilliance. Tibetans generally feel that their religion is superior to all others. The many foreigners who subscribe to Tibetan religion are the living proof for them of the inherent superiority of the "Tibetan way." Consequently, the DLG has actively and financially supported Tibetan religious and monastic institutions in India and has subtly encouraged the elimination of "little tradition" animistic elements such as oracles, shamans, etc. It has striven to keep monks together and to maintain monastic knowledge and learning and has financed a great deal of scholarship and publication in the religious sphere.

This elevation of religion to a place of intellectual and emotional superordination among the refugees leads us to the second dimension mentioned earlier, namely, the sustenance of the status of the Dalai Lama. For Tibetans who were adults when they came to India, the stature of the Dalai Lama was given. He was a great charismatic leader, the emanation of the bodhisattva deity, Avaloketišvara, incarnated into

[5] For example, the following is a typical statement found in a recent Tibetan newspaper: *nga tsho ni gzhis lus bod mi'i re yul gcig po yin* [We are the only hope of the Tibetans left behind in Tibet].

human form to help Tibetans in particular and mankind in general to advance along the path to salvation. His presence, of course, was one of the main legitimizing factors underpinning the traditional government. In India, however, with the reconstitution of the DLG as a political entity devoid of either legal foundation or control of force, the legitimizing role of the Dalai Lama has become even more important than in Tibet, particularly among the new generation of refugees. Belief in the sanctity and extraordinariness (charisma) of the Dalai Lama and his rightful role of ruler had to be enculturated into the refugee youths and maintained among the adults if the DLG were to sustain itself in its new context.

This has been very successfully accomplished. Although many factors are relevant here, one of the most important has been the virtual monopolization by the DLG of informational input to the settlers. Through the school system and various publications, the reputation and accomplishments of the Dalai Lama have been consistently exalted. The Dalai Lama has been portrayed not only as the symbol or quintessence of Tibetan national identity but also as the patron of the Tibetan people who is directly responsible for their successful adaptation in India and their future expectations. There has been in-depth coverage of the activities of the Dalai Lama, and in many cases his speeches have been reprinted as separate pamphlets. Similarly, all Tibetan school children start their school day by singing, along with the national anthem, a prayer song composed by the Dalai Lama. Whatever the religious merit of the song, it is unquestionably associated in the minds of Tibetans with the Dalai Lama himself.

Deep belief in and unfaltering reverence for the Dalai Lama are manifested continually by the people. In Mundakuppe, for example, the stereotyped phrase "by the kindness of the Dalai Lama" precedes almost all comments on the state of the refugees in India. All successes are attributed to the grace of the Dalai Lama. I have seen even very highly Westernized Tibetans spontaneously prostrate themselves before the Dalai Lama. This continued belief in the Dalai Lama (which in some senses borders on cult fervor) as both the spiritual and the political leader has played a critical role in providing the DLG the legitimacy it needs to obtain compliance from the people for its policies. Perhaps the best indication of the overall success of this policy is the fact that starting from about 1968–1969, a voluntary program of taxation (literally, *zhal 'debs* or "donations") was introduced by the DLG. This program has met with acceptance both throughout the refugee settlements in India and among Tibetans abroad. As usual, the Tibetan language media play an important role in sustaining this by publicizing donors and encouraging "friendly" competition between the different communities.

The development of strong feelings of national identity and the enhancement of the stature of the Dalai Lama have gone hand-in-hand

with an attempt to maintain cultural and politico-economic boundaries. The DLG certainly does not encourage or support policies that facilitate intimate contact and interaction with aliens, either Indians or Europeans. Endogamy is vigorously encouraged and is intertwined with generalized notions of nationalism, in that it is portrayed as absolutely fundamental to the preservation of the Tibetan race, a race endangered by the actions of the Communists in Tibet.

One of the most important policies of the DLG relevant to boundary maintenance concerns language. The DLG has energetically supported the use and teaching of Tibetan within the refugee community. The school system does a truly excellent job of teaching literary Tibetan to the refugee youth on a high level of proficiency, and the literacy rates among the young are extremely high. For the older refugees there are night schools that teach enough so that a person can read the newspapers (whose importance to the DLG has been indicated above). Spoken Tibetan is used throughout the Tibetan communities and in Mundakuppe the language is used not only in intimate, family contexts but everywhere in the camp in all situations. The settlers do not need to know any other language and most of the older ones do not. The camp leader's office (i.e., the DLG) provides the linguistic expertise and channels through which Tibetans can deal with Indians and Europeans.

Another aspect of boundary maintenance concerns the DLG's attitude toward Indian citizenship. Here we find, not surprisingly, that the DLG has taken a strong stand against Tibetans taking Indian citizenship even though this would seem to afford Tibetans competitive advantages. The current stateless status of the Tibetans places them under a variety of disadvantages with respect to such things as landownership, business licenses, and freedom of movement within India. The DLG, however, has maintained the position that Tibetans taking Indian citizenship would diminish the strength of the refugees' claims to Tibet. Taking Indian citizenship, therefore, is considered as a renunciation of Tibetan cultural and national aspirations and is actively opposed. It is obvious, however, that a consequence of this policy (whether intentional or not) is the greater dependence of the refugees on the DLG. Because as individuals Tibetans are stateless "guests" of the GOI, their strength lies in their collectivity, and it is precisely the role of the Dalai Lama and the DLG to organize and represent that collectivity.

On the local (Mundakuppe) scene, an important policy concerns economic alternatives. In the initial phases of the settlement the camp leader and the GOI felt that it was critical for the refugees to focus all their attention on learning the necessary agricultural skills. To facilitate this, a policy was instituted whereby Tibetans were not permitted to engage in other private jobs or businesses either in the camp or in the neighboring areas. This, it was felt, would preclude the many refugees

who had been traders in Tibet from seeking to earn their living in this way rather than from the land. Since the Mysore government refrained from issuing licences for shops, etc., without the recommendation of the camp leader (DLG), the settlers in fact were forced to devote all their attention to their land.

By 1966, however, this rule had outlived its utility. The settlement was an agricultural success but, as we shall see, needed supplementary sources of financial input which independent businesses could have offered. Yet the rule was not rescinded. It is difficult to avoid the conclusion that by 1966–1967, the initially nonpolitical policy had taken on manifest political dimensions. This policy obviously greatly increased the dependence of the settlers on the DLG since it eliminated one type of independent economic alternative. By making the settlers completely dependent on their land, the power of the DLG was enhanced because it, through the camp leader and the Cooperative Society, controlled the tractors, seeds, fertilizers, and the technical knowledge that supported the complex agro-business approach used in the camp. There were, in fact, several instances during my stay in the settlement when political opposition groups were refused permission to open small businesses in the nearby Indian town. This raises the question of negative sanctions. So far, we have examined only the DLG's use of positive or persuasive strategies. As one would expect, the DLG also employed negative sanctions. Basically, it used its control of resources to apply pressure on individuals to comply with its policies. For example, political opponents of the DLG find that their children do not receive scholarships for higher education or jobs in government related activities. An example from Mundakuppe will illustrate how such sanctions were employed in the settlements.

In 1963, the Cooperative Society was incorporated under the control of the camp leader and the DLG. Its membership was to consist of all the landholding settlers, each of whom was supposed to purchase at least one 10-rupee share. While most of the Tibetans did this, a number did not. Not surprisingly, almost all of those who did not buy shares were from a subcultural area traditionally hostile to the DLG and a religious sect different from that of the Dalai Lama. In addition to these people, a number of others from that region had come to the settlement subsequent to the initial membership drive.

In 1966, the camp leader and the head of the Cooperative Society decided to try to increase the membership of the cooperative, particularly among that dissident segment. They used as leverage their control over rationed goods. The state government administered the ration quotas through agents who could pay for the goods in a lump sum and see to their collection and distribution. The Cooperative Society took on this job for the settlement. The items involved were important ones in the diet of the Tibetans, including such things as wheat and sugar. The camp leader,

then, in 1966 informed the people that it would not issue rations to persons who were not members of the society as this was not fair to those who had paid for their shares. Because the nonmembers wanted these foodstuffs, they were effectively forced to join to obtain them.

These, then, comprise the main ways the DLG has attempted to maintain its authority. While changes have occurred in the traditional political system, political continuity in terms of hierarchical elitist authority is the single most important factor underlying the Tibetans' successful adaptation. The pluralistic nature of the adaptation can be seen to result partly from the policies of the GOI but mainly from the policies and strategies of the DLG. The general pluralistic accommodation of Tibetans in Mundakuppe is as much a byproduct of political prerequisites as a valued end in itself.

But what of Indo-Tibetan contact within this adaptation? The relations between the two ethnic groups have been cordial. There has been no significant hostility or conflict even though the Tibetans share the same niche with Indians and are competing for resources with the Indians.

Part of the answer to this has already been discussed. The "farming only" policy of the DLG not only strengthened the office but also *artificially* delimited a subniche for the Tibetans. By voluntarily relinquishing one major economic arena to the local population, the seemingly inevitable interethnic competition for resources has been decreased, if not eliminated. Consequently, the tremendous economic development of the surrounding area, particularly the town of Aganlashuk, has been controlled by Indians. By limiting themselves to the roles of primary producer and consumer, the Tibetans have provided the indigenous Indians a whole new source of wealth and income. This has aided the merchant class as well as others since the development of new and the expansion of old service industries has created many new jobs.

The coming of Tibetans has transformed the sleepy town of Aganlashuk into a bustling trade and business center. Moreover, during the two-year period I was in Mundakuppe, a new business area was developing at the intersection of the motor highway and the camp dirt road. What was initially a small administrative complex of the government of the state of Mysore had grown considerably; by the time I left it comprised several restaurants, grocery stores, and a bicycle repair and sales shop.

The presence of Tibetans has also benefited the poor landless Indians by affording them a new source of employment: working for Tibetans. Hundreds of Indians (men, women, and children) work in the fields for Tibetans on a day-wage basis. Furthermore, some Indian youths, as mentioned above, have begun to initiate relationships with Tibetan families wherein they live with the Tibetans, receiving room and board in return for which they do odd jobs around the house. For the beggars,

Mundakuppe has become a gold mine and is regularly plied by many of them.

In addition to the merchants and the poor, the wealthy landowners have also benefited financially from the settlement. The DLG has consciously attempted to alleviate the natural jealousy resulting from the Tibetans' possession of tractors and trucks by making the tractors available on a rental basis to the Indian landowners. Many Indians have availed themselves of this by hiring the tractors and drivers directly. Others have leased sections of unused land to the Tibetan cooperative, a practice very advantageous because there is no danger of the tenant not relinquishing the land.

There is no question, then, but that the general area around Mundakuppe has prospered as a result of the Tibetan settlement. It is not surprising, therefore, to find that in 1970–1971 a new settlement of four thousand Tibetans was started contigious to Mundakuppe. Even more recently, several thousand monks have been resettled from Assam to an area also adjacent to Mundakuppe. In all, there are about 10,000 Tibetans living in that area. In Mysore as a whole, there are about 17,000 Tibetans.

The lack of ethnic hostility and conflict between Tibetans and Indians must be seen as a consequence of both the artificial restriction of resource competition and the general economic benefits which the presence and success of the refugees have yielded for local Indians.

CONCLUSION

I have illustrated some of the main aspects of the initial process of adaptation of Tibetans in Mundakuppe, in particular, and India, in general. In the initial decade of residence in India the Tibetans, with the help of the GOI, the state governments, and the foreign sectors, have made tremendous adjustments to the new social and physical environment they encountered. Underlying the success of this adjustment has been the continuity of many traditional Tibetan sociocultural institutions, in particular the governmental structure headed by the Dalai Lama. Although there have been many changes in the DLG in India with respect to recruitment, authority, and power, its fundamental traditional "legitimate political authority" has been continued. The DLG offered the disparate Tibetan refugees tremendous competitive advantages, particularly in the early years of settlement. What has been surprising, however, is the DLG's ability to maintain its superordinate position. I have tried to indicate some of the basic strategies the DLG has employed to accomplish this. I also have tried to show how basic political requirements have led the DLG to direct the process of adjustment in a direction emphasiz-

ing ethnic identity and integrity and how this has resulted in the pluralistic, cultural-separatist nature of the Tibetan adaptation in India.

It is difficult, however, to speak of the adaptation of Tibetans in India, for the concept of adaptation implies a dynamic process. As John Bennett (1969:18) has written: "Adaptation is conceived as a process of potential adjustment to existing and changing conditions." With respect to the Tibetans, a number of changing circumstances ("inputs") have already (or will) set into motion important new responses. Although these will be better dealt with in a separate paper, it would be misleading to conclude without giving some indication of the nature of these new factors.

The new inputs are basically threefold. First, there is the question of the long-term economic stability of the settlement. Second, there is a pattern of the DLG being decreasingly able to aggregate resources and thus directly benefit the settlers economically. And third, the settlers themselves are becoming increasingly confident of their ability to exist alone in the Indian context, and therefore they are increasingly less apprehensive of undertaking independent courses of action.

One important dimension of the economic circumstances of Mundakuppe is the beginning of a disparity between output and population. Because of good medical care, the death rate has been dramatically reduced over what it would have been in Tibet. Since birth control is not used in the settlement (the DLG vigorously opposes it), there has been a steady population increase. However, the amount of land available is fixed. Thus, as the population increases, the surplus margin produced by the land will decrease, given the same level of productive output. Moreover, there is no likelihood that production will increase. Chemical fertilizers and insecticides are already in use and, as the land may be overworked, the output may even decrease. Given the nature of land tenure described above, it is also certain that settlers will not invest private capital to improve their land and generate higher output. Consequently, unless there is some form of out-migration of excess population or unless other, nonagricultural economic sources of income are developed, the long-term future of Mundakuppe faces serious difficulties.

As to economic alternatives, though the "farming only" policy limits one obvious type of alternative, a number of settlers have taken to peddling woolen sweaters throughout India in the agricultural off-season. Tibetans, in fact, have become famous for this type of trading. How long the "farming only" policy can be maintained is another matter, and, even more seriously, what will happen to Indo-Tibetan relations when it ends, is at present imponderable.

Out-migration, on the other hand, is not a very likely alternative. Employment opportunities for Tibetans are very limited. However, more recently a new factor has emerged which may have an important impact.

The creation, contiguous to Mundakuppe, of a large settlement of 3,000 monks, all from Drepung monastery, has opened a potential population-absorbing channel. The monks will be able to work their land communally and thus will make maximally efficient use of the mechanization available to them. Their yield per capita will be considerably higher than that of individual families with their few acres. Consequently, they will be able to support numbers well in excess of the one-person-per-acre ratio of the lay settlers. Moreover, it is not unreasonable to expect that the monastic units will also obtain income by taking up their traditional money-lending activities. They also will undoubtedly receive extensive gifts from the lay settlers. The significance of this for population distribution lies in the traditional Tibetan custom of giving children as monks to the monasteries and the monastery taking care of their sustenance. I expect that this traditional pattern will re-emerge and become an important channel for population redistribution.

If these are some poignant future problems, the present also has produced important changes. Prime among these is the decreasing ability of the DLG to obtain foreign funds. Increasingly, the DLG is becoming dependent upon the voluntary "taxes" that the refugees (in India and abroad) have been paying. It has had to cut back much of the fat from the elaborate bureaucratic network it had developed in the earlier years. Thus, there are a growing number of young educated Tibetans who would have become DLG officials five years ago but who today have to find their own livelihood or otherwise to farm land in the settlements. This growing inability of the DLG to provide high status employment for the youth they have carefully reared and molded is beginning to weaken its position.

The best indication of this is the growing emergence (or better, re-emergence) of political opposition groups. In recent years, associations and clubs from traditionally hostile regional and subcultural segments have begun to take a more active and open part in intra-Tibetan political competition. In some instances these groups have pursued actions independent of the Tibetan "national" framework. Among the young, there also has been an increase in independent thought and speech, including open criticism of governmental actions. In Mundakuppe, for example, there are those who would like to see the DLG appointed camp leader replaced by an *elected* settler. While, on the whole, the DLG's vigorous policy of developing a national identity and spirit has been successful, it obviously has not eradicated traditional particularistic affiliations.

In conclusion, the situation among Tibetan refugees in India is far from settled. In the next decade, these populations will be confronted by very serious economic and political problems. Whether their initial emphasis on a cultural-pluralistic or ethnic strategy will prove workable in the long run is problematic. For the present, such a strategy has greatly facilitated

the resettlement and rehabilitation of large numbers of Tibetans in an alien cultural milieu. However, its success thus far has depended upon a very delicate balance of institutional processes that have served to regulate intra- and interethnic relationships in respect to the competition for limited environmental resources.

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The "Abominable Snowman": Himalayan Religion and Folklore from the Lepchas of Sikkim

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Before addressing the problem of the Himalayan snowman, it is important to take up some general considerations. The problem is topical because some modern mountaineering expeditions have worked with natives of the region who live by their own nonscientific concepts. While making their way through the high mountain regions, the expeditions came upon some strange tracks in the snow, the origin of which could not be immediately explained. The natives were horrified, and alluded to the snowman as the obvious explanation for the tracks. To the mountaineers this was no explanation, because the snowman had been hitherto unknown to science. Thus, a contradiction between the beliefs of the natives and the outlook of modern science led to the search for the snowman, considered by the mountaineers to be an unknown animal (Gurung 1961).

Despite the numerous expeditions that have explored the region up to the present time, no such animal has been found. The question that therefore arises is whether the problem of the snowman might not be viewed from the angle of local religion and folklore. In such an approach, the question of cultures is very complex. We must distinguish levels of different cultural origin — Tibetan and Lepcha — and at times distinguish various levels within the same culture.

The part of the Himalayan Range in which we are interested is primarily in Sikkim, but we are also concerned with some parts of Nepal. The Tibetan culture which to a high degree influences the northern regions is characterized by two levels: the ordinary old folk culture and the strongly literary, high culture of Lamaism. In many respects they are at present so interwoven that we cannot distinguish one from the other, but in other respects a number of features and elements impart a definite imprint of their origins.

The southernmost Tibetan areas have retained an old folk culture with many pre-Lamaist religious features and elements. These areas have various old centers of the pre-Lamaist Bön religion, and they have the big monasteries of Red Sect Lamaism, called *Nying ma pa.*

The culture of the indigenous Lepchas of Sikkim exhibits two religious levels: the original hunters and mountain agriculturists with their priests, priestesses, cults, and mythology; and the later, superimposed layer influenced by the local lamas of the *Nying ma pa* monasteries and their ceremonies and mythology. Through the centuries, the relationship between these two religions has developed from competition to coexistence to a kind of cooperation (Gorer 1938:186ff.; Siiger 1972:237).

For a study of the problem, we must rely on a number of written sources of varied origins and character. The local, so-called Lepcha books, written in Lepcha script, are strongly influenced by Tibetan Lamaism, and deal with other questions (Siiger 1967a:23ff.). We must, therefore, turn to the material collected in the field by students and anthropologists during the last hundred years or so. For a general evaluation of their publications, I refer to my own book on the Lepchas (Siiger 1967a:17ff.). When these publications are used as sources for the study of the present problem, however, we are faced with a special difficulty. Several of these authors use their own spellings of Lepcha words and names, which in some instances may vary from one author to another to such a degree that the same word can be almost unrecognizable. In such cases, we must turn to the entire mythological context for an explanation. Even so, we are at times left in the dark.

Furthermore, since these authors never collected their material with regard to the present problem, we have to extract a number of scattered and frequently fragmentary pieces of information from the sources in order to elucidate our particular problem. In spite of these difficulties, it seems to me that we can obtain sufficient detail to construct a mosaic, which may then be used to substantiate a tentative hypothesis.

Even so, we must be careful because the influence of Tibetan Lamaism, especially that of the *Nying ma pa,* is obvious in various ways, having left its impression on the mythology and sometimes on the cult ceremonies (Siiger 1972:236).

In both areas — the southernmost Tibetan Himalaya and northern Sikkim — the snowman figures in folklore and, in special ways, in religion.

The common Tibetan term for the snowman, *mu rgod/mi rgod,* means "wild untamed man." He is said to be an apelike, hairy creature. This image is also associated with other terms sometimes used for the snowman, such as *gangs mi* [glacier man], *mi chen po* [big great man], and *mi*

bom po [strong robust man]. The term *mi shom po* [strong man] is also applied to the snowman (Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1956a:344 fn.1; 1956b: 155ff.).

It is said that this snowman carries a large stone as a weapon, and that he makes a characteristic whistling sound. When walking in the high, snowy regions, he leaves very large footprints in the snow. When moving in the forests he uses all four limbs to swing from tree to tree, but in the open country he generally walks upright (Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1965b:158, 160).

The Sherpas of Nepal conceive of the snowman as an apelike creature who leaves his footprints in the snow. They call the snowman *Yeti,* a term used by many Himalayan expeditions, and translated "abominable." The Sherpas avoid meeting the *Yeti* because the sight of him portends misfortune (Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1956b:155).

The notion of the snowman as an ape or an apelike creature brings to mind the well-known, pre-Lamaist Tibetan legend of the origin of mankind from a monkey and a divine female. But at present no direct connection can be proved (Haarh 1969:295–297 passim; Waddell 1959:19). Drawings of the snowman can be found in some picture books that seem to have originated in the Chinese-Tibetan area (cf., Vlček 1959).

Particular parts of the snowman are sometimes used in connection with Tibetan religious or magical rituals. In the iconography of one of the secret aspects of a local protective deity called *rdo rje dbang drag rtsal,* this deity is dressed in the skin of a "wild man" *mi rgod lpags* (Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1956a:251). Adherents of the ancient Bön religion used the blood of the *mi rgod* for certain magical rites. For this purpose the *mi rgod* had to be killed by a sharp weapon or by an arrow, and its blood was mixed with poison and mustard (Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1956a:344).

According to this last instance the snowman is a real creature, an opinion prevalent among the Tibetans whether they consider him to be dangerous or shy, harmless, and practically extinct (Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1956a:344). A snowman can live very long, a notion that arose from the story of a snowman living on the mountain called *mi go ri* [the snowman mountain], and seen limping from a wound he had received during a hunt three generations before (Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1956b:158).

Turning to the Lepchas of Sikkim, we shall approach our problem not directly, but indirectly, i.e., via their entire universe, because the snowman seems to be a detail of this great whole. The universe of the Lepchas comprises a huge number of supernatural beings that can be divided into two types: the mostly benign *rŭm* and the hostile *mung.* Some of the supernatural beings constitute families, just like human beings (Siiger 1967a:112ff.; 143ff.; 172ff.).

A further investigation reveals that the lives of these supernatural

beings can be better understood if we attempt to arrange them into groups according to their connection with the lives and activities of human beings. In this way we may speak of certain complexes, each of which centers on a number of functions or activities in which the supernatural beings as well as the humans play parts. These complexes display, so to speak, a mutual cooperation, and at times even an interdependence, between the two categories of partners. Nevertheless, the supernatural beings still occupy a superior position. Thus one could, for instance, speak of an origin complex, a hunting complex, an agricultural fertility complex, a death complex, and others (Siiger 1968:277ff.). Some of these complexes are fairly constant because they correspond to fundamental and unalterable conditions of human life; others may change in content and importance according to the varying conditions and development of human society.

In the Lepcha hunting complex, two types of supernatural beings, *rŭm* and *mung,* appear. Twenty-three names have been registered, some of which seem to be variations of the same name, but there may be more (Jest 1960:133). We cannot account for all of these supernatural beings, because at present some of them are mere names. Some of the names, however, refer to important supernatural beings of whom we have more knowledge. Thus, it emerges that certain characteristics may be emphasized, depending on the mountain zones and the particular animals with which these supernatural beings are associated.

It is interesting to note that in the highest snow regions we meet the snowman whom the Lepchas call *chu mung* [glacier *mung*] or *hlo mung* [the *mung* of the higher mountain regions]. The name *chu rŭm* may also be found (Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1956a:344; 1956b:158; *Dictionary of the Lepcha language* 1898:382a, 81b). The word "glacier" (*chu*) appears not only in the Lepcha material but also in Tibetan material by the name *gangs mi* (Tibetan: *gangs* [glacier]). It is obvious that these names are not personal names, but indications of the region with which the supernatural being is associated.

It is further told about this being that the Lepchas worship him as the god of the hunt, the owner of all mountain game, and the lord of all forest creatures (Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1956a:344; 1956b:158; *Dictionary of the Lepcha language* 1898:382a, 81b). Unfortunately, we know nothing more about how the god is worshiped, but it is important to observe that his dominion also includes the animals of the forest region.

The central supernatural being of the hunting complex is *pong rŭm,* also called *pum rŭm* ["chief" or "principal" *rŭm*] (Hermanns 1954:47ff., 30; *Dictionary of the Lepcha language* 1898:219a). His wife is *shing rŭm* [goddess of the forests] (Gorer 1938:150, 244).

According to one investigator *pŭm rum/pong rŭm* is also known as *dju-thing* because he is the lord or master (*thing*) who leads *dju* [the game]

to the hunter. As such he is called by different surnames, depending on the species of animals he leads to the hunter: *mo-nom-dju* [chamois and the wild sheep] in the high mountain regions; *se-go-bu-log-dju* [stag and the bear] in the lower hills; and *se-wing-dju* in the lower plains (Hermanns 1954:47ff.).

As the king of all animals and the patron god of hunters, this *rŭm* occupies the most prominent position in the hunting complex with a relationship to both animals and humans.

It is, therefore, no wonder that in ancient times there was an intimate connection between this *rŭm* and the hunters who sought his support and protection. But the *rŭm* was very strict in his demands on the hunters, and the young novice had to go through a period of apprenticeship with an old, experienced hunter in order to learn his duties (Morris 1938:196; Gorer 1938:245).

Once a year all hunters must perform a sacrifice to this *rŭm*, and each time they set out for the hunt they offer a sacrifice, accompanied by a prayer. Having learned the procedure of the annual sacrifice, the young hunter must perform it regularly for the rest of his life. Should he make a mistake, he must repeat the whole ceremony because the *rŭm* does not tolerate any deviations from tradition (Morris 1938:193ff.; Gorer 1938:244ff.).

When the hunter of Lingthem, northern Sikkim, has killed an animal, he places it on the ground, the head in front with a foreleg and a hind leg on either side and with the singed intestines in the middle. He crouches behind and speaks slowly and softly, gently throwing the singed intestines bit by bit over the animal's head. In Tingbung, northern Sikkim, these bits consist of the head, liver, tongue, ears, and tail of the animal (Morris 1938:193ff.; Gorer 1938:98).

These details concern the common relationship between this *rŭm*, the animals, and the ordinary Lepcha hunter. There are, however, in the Lepcha society some families who, according to their own venerated lineage traditions, have ancient and intimate connections with a supernatural being (Siiger 1967a:112ff.). This applies to the now almost extinct Salong *pŭ tsho* [lineage] living in a remote area rather close to Mount Kanchenjunga.

One day the ancestor of this lineage, while walking through the forest, came upon what he thought was a dead bear. He cut it up and ate part of it. On doing so *pong rŭm* appeared to him and said that because he had eaten part of his body, he and his children must henceforth serve him, worship him, make offerings to him. Henceforth also he and his children might eat all animals, even snakes, with impunity. The bear was in reality an incarnation of *pong rŭm*, who for a while was taking a rest outside his incorporeal self (Gorer 1938:56; Morris 1938:194).

This event, which tied the *rŭm* and the lineage into a kind of totemistic relationship, with the bear as the unifying intermediary, gives a profound perspective on the understanding of the ancient hunting complex. At the same time, it adds a new element to the understanding of the personality of *pong rŭm*, i.e., his appearance in the form of a bear when seeking a physical manifestation.

The personality of *pong rŭm* and the range of his influence will be further explained when we consider his position within the agricultural fertility complex. The center of this complex is located at the mythical *mă yel,* halfway up the great, commanding Mount Kanchenjunga. Its base shelters the female deity of the origin of mankind, while the great protector god of Sikkim and the Lepchas resides at the summit (Siiger 1968:277ff.).

From the strange *mă yel* beings, sometimes called *rŭm*, living at the *mă yel* place, comes the fertility of the rice, maize, wheat, yam, pumpkins, chilies, and manioc. The *mă yel* beings number seven or nine couples, are hairy all over, very small, almost like dwarfs, and have huge goiters. This last feature is generally considered to be a characteristic of fertility. They never die; they are children at dawn, grown up at noon, and old in the evening. They have no children (Siiger 1967a:89ff.; Gorer 1938:238ff.; Morris 1938:181, 186ff.).

The most important of these *mă yel* beings are known by name, and one of them is called *mă yel yuk rŭm* ["the high" or "noble god" of *mă yel*] (*Dictionary of the Lepcha language* 1898:325a). This *mă yel yuk rŭm* is the same as *pong rŭm*, demonstrating the intimate connection of the hunting complex with the fertility complex (Gorer 1938:236).

Moreover, in the legends dealing with the *mă yel* place, it is told that *pong rŭm* has two younger brothers, and that these three together have functions as *Sok-po* [guardians] of the *mă yel* place, the ibex, and the musk deer. The younger brothers, called Mi-tik and Tom-tik, are very cruel; Tom-tik is like a bear (Gorer 1938:236).

In these legends about the *mă yel* place, there are two points of particular importance. The hunting complex is so closely associated with the fertility complex that we may consider them to be interwoven. The hunting god *pong rŭm* is one of the *mă yel* beings, and as such has the particular *mă yel* name, *mă yel yuk rŭm*.

Because the *mă yel* place provides the Lepcha people with agricultural fertility, the protection of this fertility is, of course, of paramount importance. This obligation falls upon *pong rŭm* and his two brothers, who now guard not only the prominent animals of the high mountain regions, but also the fertility place itself. We also notice that the bear, which in the previously mentioned legend was the incarnation of *pong rŭm*, is here the body of the younger brother called Tom-tik. We cannot account for this difference; it may be due to the fact that *pong rŭm*, as a high ranking

member (compare his *mă yel* name) of the *mă yel* beings, cannot appear in the body of a bear, and that this incarnation has been transferred to his younger brother. In any case, *pong rŭm*, the god of hunting, is also a *rŭm* of the *mă yel* place, and to his ordinary function as guardian of the wild animals has been added the function of supreme guardian of the place of agricultural fertility and its inhabitants, the *mă yel* beings.

In the present Lepcha society there are two factors that are of paramount importance because they have come from the outside world and have caused a fundamental change in the basic material culture of the Lepchas.

The first is the introduction of firearms for hunting. They came into use long ago, although some few men in the remote areas still hunt in the ancient way, with bows and arrows. Hunting with firearms has influenced the old habits to such a degree that the ancient rule, prohibiting a young hunter from eating the meat of the first hundred animals he kills, does not apply to the man hunting with firearms (Gorer 1938:85; Morris 1938:193). As a whole it can be said that most of the ancient hunting ceremonies have become obsolete.

The second factor is the replacement of the old dry rice cultivation with modern wet rice cultivation, a change that took place about the turn of the century. In the wake of this development, the ancient dry rice rituals and prayers have disappeared rapidly, and today only a few old people recall them (Siiger 1967a:91).

In both cases, modern generations have demonstrated by their behavior that they can manage these two means of supplying food without the cooperation of the supernatural beings.

This growth of independence has weakened the bond uniting supernatural beings with humans so that, feeling superfluous, the *mă yel* have withdrawn from the lives of humans and retired to their distant and exclusive abode. In the past, they sometimes helped the Lepchas in difficult situations. Now, the legend informs us, they will return only if the people are on the verge of extinction (Gorer 1938:237; Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1956b:134).

As for *pong rŭm*, the situation is more portentous. The decrease in the worship of *pong rŭm* corresponds to his gradually worsening attitude toward human beings. He became enraged and reacted with persecution and punishment.

Thus, the present relationship between the hunter and the *rŭm* is very strained. If the hunter does not conform meticulously to the rules of sacrifice to the *rŭm*, he can be sure of some kind of retaliation, varying from minor persecutions to full-scale revenge. Hunters who neglect their ordinary ritual duties to the *rŭm* may be pursued by the sinister whistling sound, characteristic of the ominous presence of *pong rŭm*, or they may hear the thump of heavy stones falling, though no falling stones are to be

seen. Even the hunter's children may be persecuted (Gorer 1938: 245).

The hunter's obligation of an annual sacrifice to *pong rŭm* continues for the rest of his life, even if he has given up hunting. One retired hunter who had neglected his annual sacrificial duties had stones thrown at his orange trees at night. Although he arranged an offering to *pong rŭm* and asked for forgiveness, stating that he would hunt no more, it was in vain. One night he heard his dog barking and whining in a most peculiar way. Going outside, he found it lying dead without any marks on its body (Morris 1938:195; Gorer 1938:245ff.). A keen boar hunter who had killed a dozen wild boars, but did not know the proper way of offering to *pong rŭm* after the kill, was overtaken by the anger of the *rŭm* and killed. Only his bones were found later (Gorer 1938:403). A young hunter, ignorant of the proper way of offering the hunter's sacrifice, asked his maternal uncle to do it on his behalf. But the uncle sacrificed to his own god instead of to *pong rŭm*, and the young man was taken ill and died (Gorer 1938:404).

The once-great and powerful hunting *rŭm* has turned into a primarily malicious being because the hunters have neglected proper ceremonial sacrifices. In this way his behavior becomes stamped by a psychological pattern similar to that of the neglected children of the great Lepcha goddess of procreation. Motivated by jealousy against the favored human children of the goddess, they turned into evil *mung* constantly persecuting their human brothers and sisters (Siiger 1972:240, 244).

Considering that both *pong rŭm* and *chu mung/rŭm* are supernatural beings belonging to the hunting complex, we encounter the problem of the relationship between phenomena of the natural and supernatural spheres.

There can be no doubt that some phenomena of the Lepcha universe belong distinctly to the natural sphere and others to the supernatural sphere. It is, however, obvious that some phenomena occupy a position in between, or rather, belong to both spheres. Like any other supernatural being, *pong rŭm* can manifest himself at will in whatever sphere he chooses. It may be in a visible shape, e.g., a bear, or as the originator of strange, often alarming incidents, signaling his presence and giving humans an admonition or an omen.

In sum, the ancient Lepcha hunting complex comprises many supernatural beings associated with various mountain regions, including the supernatural snowman in the glacier areas. The prominent supernatural being of the hunting complex, who is included in the agricultural fertility complex, has since ancient times preferred the body of a bear as his physical manifestation. Due to modern developments, the Lepchas have increasingly neglected their ceremonial duties toward this being who has,

therefore, reacted with jealous persecutions, deeply alarming the Lepchas. Wanderers in the mountain areas, therefore, interpret unusual sounds, tracks, etc., as omens of activity meant to punish them for their neglect.

Similarly, we might surmise that the people of Nepal might have similar notions about the supernatural world. I am well aware that I cannot at present prove this suggestion, but it seems to me that many corroborating details point in this direction.

The fear, even horror expressed by native participants of the mountaineering expeditions is a horror primarily of the supernatural side of the snowman. To them, the tracks indicated that human beings had come too close to his domain. At any moment he might reveal his presence, either by appearing in the shape of a monstrous and dangerous bear or ape, or in some other physical manifestation.

Based on the foregoing discussion, it would appear that the problem of the snowman would best be studied primarily in the context of religion and folklore and only secondarily as a zoological problem.

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SECTION FOUR

Perspectives Merged: The Newars

Notes on the Origins of the Newars of the Kathmandu Valley of Nepal

VICTOR S. DOHERTY

Systematic work in tracing the ethnic origins of different peoples is not only of antiquarian interest. Such attempts help to identify those cultural systems that persist and those that are seemingly less central to a people's life. Knowledge of such central systems is important in analyzing both the past and the present for ethnic groups of related culture and origin. Such knowledge and analysis can also be of great importance to the general comparativist.

With these points in mind, I have two main purposes. First, I intend to review existing hypotheses on the ethnic origins of the Newars, and to introduce new evidence that has recently become available. I hope to demonstrate that one main, well-founded hypothesis can form the basis for further work on this topic. A second purpose is to show that historical background will help determine the cultural ground rules for discussing Newari materials in theoretical questions such as the nature of cultural forms found in one or another variation over the Indian subcontinent (Dumont 1961–1965; Rosser 1966).

THE NEWARS AT PRESENT

The Newars are a highly civilized people of the central Himalayan region of South Asia. They speak a Tibeto-Burman language in which have been incorporated many Indic loanwords. They number about 400,000 (D. B. Bista 1972:17–18), and 55 percent of this number live in the Kathmandu Valley. They have spread from the valley as merchant families living in some of the larger trade and governmental centers of the country. This movement began in force after the establishment in the valley and in other newly consolidated areas of Central Nepal of the ruling Shah

dynasty, an Indic group of relatively recent plains Rajput descent. The Shahs, from their base in Gorkha to the west, conquered the valley in 1768. In the Kathmandu Valley the Newars have been reasserting their influence increasingly in recent years, after a period of internal dissension among Newar groups and between Newars and the ruling *kshatriya* Hindus in the early 1900's (see Rosser 1966).

By religion the Newars are both Hindu and Buddhist, having adopted the latter religion soon after its origin in India. One of their three main towns in the valley (Patan) is said to have been founded by Ashoka (or one of his emissaries), who is said to have fixed the four great Buddhist *stupas* which mark its boundaries. Hinduism and Buddhism merge into one another, and both incorporate what seem to be substrata of more aboriginal religious practice. The business of determining which is which is made no easier by the ethic of tolerance professed by each of these two major religions and by the historical origin of one in the other. (For general discussions of the spread of Buddhism into Nepal, see Snellgrove [1957] and Snellgrove and Richardson [1968].)

HISTORY AND CHARACTERISTICS

Our first written evidence for the presence of the Newars in the Kathmandu Valley comes from the fifth century A.D., in a time of Buddhist influence under the Licchavi dynasty (Regmi 1960:21). Names in inscriptions from this time are clearly Newari, but cannot be connected with any known plains people or speech; Newari names also differ from the Licchavi names. Kautilya in the fourth century B.C. (HMG 1969:42) stated that people living in the Nepal Valley exported "carpets, blankets, hides and skins" to the south. Chinese Buddhist pilgrims around 700 A.D. mentioned that most of the population were traders, and most of the fixed settlements were for trade. In the medieval period and later, after the establishment of the central Tibetan kingdom and the Buddhist religion there, Newari brass and precious-metal workers were in demand in Tibet and even in China.

By choice the present-day Newars are city and town dwellers, living in compact settlements of varying size throughout the valley. Non-Newars have two stereotypes of these people: as shopkeepers and long-distance traders; and as farmers, personified by the *jyāpu* or "peasant" (compare Tibetan orthographic *bya-ba*, phonetic *ja-ba* [work, deed]). In fact these two callings do attract the bulk of Newar enterprise. As merchants their name is a byword among the hillmen. As farmers they are among the most industrious and successful in the country. In this they are aided by the exceptionally rich valley soil; but their industry and the pressure of population lead them to plant several crops per year, to cultivate

intensively, to use even the ridges between paddy fields for vegetables and lentils, and to carry muck from the riverbeds to spread on their fields.

PHYSICAL TYPE AND MIGRATIONS

Formal physical anthropological information on the Newars is scanty. Newar facial and body structure are an Indic subtype of the Mongolian (Chatterji 1951). Regmi (1960:32–33) follows common practice when he notes their look-alike characteristics in comparison with groups in the present-day Indian Northeast Frontier Areas (NEFA) and the Nepal plains: in general physical makeup the Newars are said to resemble the Nagas to the east on the one hand and the Rajbansis of the plains to the south on the other, while differing from the generally bigger boned and taller Tibetans to the north.

Chatterji evidently followed a long-standing hypothesis based on linguistic analysis (see below) when he postulated two branches of expansion westward along the Himalayas, arising somewhere beyond and to the north of Assam and NEFA. The first branch, in which Regmi and others tend to include the Newars, is assumed to have spread westward on a line south of the Himalayas themselves, through the plains and also through the lower mountains and the river valleys which drain them. The second branch, in which the Tibetans are included, is said to have spread from the north. (Nepali groups such as the Sherpas are clearly ethnic Tibetans who have moved south.) Note, however, that such physical anthropological data as we do possess are quite sparse. One aim of this paper is to revise the two-way wave scheme for peopling the Himalayan regions of Nepal from both the north and the east, at least as this scheme affects the Newars; the revision will be based primarily on linguistic grounds.

Finally, immigration to the valley from India itself, especially neighboring Bihar and Bengal, seems to have been going on for a long time. India clearly has been a source of physical influence and of strong cultural and linguistic loans. But available evidence reviewed below leads to the conclusion that Indian cultural and linguistic influence has been secondary. The assertion sometimes made that the Newars are connected with the Nayars of South India has no supporting evidence (Levi 1905; Chatterji 1951).

CULTURAL PECULIARITIES OF THE NEWARS

Apart from their exceedingly complex religious life, several aspects of

Newari material culture set them off from their neighbors. Architecturally, their houses are close-packed and often rise to three stories or more. Made of brick, they have four-cornered tiled roofs in two pitched planes, with or without hipped ends. Stylistic architectural detail observable today runs a gamut up to and including Greco-Roman revival and Indian *dak bungalow* influence. In my view, the important points about Newari house architecture are not stylistic. For despite the pitched roofline (necessary in the valley's rather wet climate) some degree of "Tibetan" influence seems likely in the utilization of space: domestic animals are often housed in part of the ground floor space, living and sleeping areas are in the middle stories, and the kitchen is placed on the upper floor. This placement of the kitchen, especially, is unlike the custom in the plains and elsewhere in Nepal, except for groups whose ethnic connection with Tibet is clear.

The ideal overall houseplan (HMG 1969:56) is linkage of successive buildings into a courtyard arrangement as the domestic unit grows. The idea of a courtyard in itself cannot be connected with either northern or southern influence, since it is present in both Tibet (Stein 1972:120) and India and could just as easily be a local development. A cut-out, flat section is often provided in the roof for drying grain and vegetables. This emphasis on the upper stories and the roof is found in Tibet. But it is not found in either Bengal or Bihar — the main areas from which Indian influence has come to the Kathmandu Valley — or among the Nepali peoples who have traceable, close origins in India. In the tight clustering of their houses the Newars resemble their neighbors to the north and of northern origin.

CLASSIFICATION OF THE NEWARI LANGUAGE: FIRST STUDIES

The first widescale attempt to classify the languages of the Himalayas was that of the Linguistic Survey of India, under the direction of Sir George A. Grierson (1927). The survey's report distinguished two classes of "Himalayan" languages: the "complex pronominalized" and the "non-pronominalized." It was at this time too that the first suggestions were made of a northern and a southern wave of migration along the Himalayas from east to west (already mentioned in connection with Chatterji's and Regmi's work). The complex pronominalized are presumed to be the languages of the peoples who arrived earliest, since they have incorporated the Munda (Austro-Asiatic) device of fusing subject and object pronouns with the verb itself (Grierson 1927:vol. 1, pt. 1: 53, 57). Pronominalized languages spoken in Nepal include Limbu, Rai, and Dhimal. Nonpronominalized representatives of Grierson's "Tibeto-

Himalayan" branch include Gurung, Magar, Rong (Lepcha), and Murmi (Tamang).

Newari was classified with the nonpronominalized Himalayan languages according to this scheme. Its analysis was left very much as Hodgson (1874) left it earlier: a recognition of the heavy debt in Sanskrit and other Indian language loans from the south; and a speculation based on word correspondences and the Mongolian physical affinities of the people that probably it was ultimately traceable to the north. No firm connection with any branch or pattern of migration was made. Other languages in the survey fitted the two-branch migration pattern noted above, but it seemed difficult to give Newari specific placement.

OTHER CLASSIFICATORY WORK ON NEWARI

Robert Shafer (working at times with Paul Benedict) made an attempt on a large scale to classify the Tibetan, Chinese, and Burmese language groups. His work has been heavily criticized (R. Miller 1970), especially for his postulated Sino-Tibetan reconstructions. Nevertheless, his work on the position of Newari among what he called the "Himalayish" languages seems to have been in the right direction.

In the course of his research on Sino-Tibetan, Shafer (1952) published a separate article on Newari. He compared the treatment of medial and final vowels, final diphthongs, and final consonants in Old Tibetan, Middle Burmese, Kukish (the reconstructed ancestor of the Kuki-Chin tongues), and Newari. His conclusions were that "the loss of nearly all trace of [archaic Tibeto-Burman] prefixes and of many final consonants" connects Newari with the Burmese and Kuki-Chin languages; while its basic shared word and phonetic stock connect it closely to Tibetan. "Its ties are with the languages to the north [Tibet] and to the east [Burma and the Indo-Burmese frontier] rather than with the Tibeto-Burmic languages of Assam" (Shafer 1952:93).

Miller's criticism of Shafer centered on Shafer's uncritical use of material for reconstructing protoforms, and a poor attention to different stages of a language (particularly Tibetan) when the available corpus covers a long period. But if Shafer was right for Newari, then an important consequence for our discussion is that it would become difficult to connect Newari with peoples moving west through the southern slopes and nearby plains of the Himalayas. And it is worth noting that the analysts for the Linguistic Survey of India, who proposed such a pattern of migration of some Tibeto-Burman speakers, were unable to connect Newari closely with the languages supposedly showing this pattern. Evidence confirming Shafer's placement of Newari is presented below.

GLOVER'S WORK ON NEWARI

Warren W. Glover (1970) has recently announced his independent corroboration of Shafer's main outline of Sino-Tibetan linguistic relationships as these relate to Newari and a number of other languages of Nepal. Shafer tried to work with sound correspondences across languages, while Miller (1970:404) has observed that lexicostatistics presents one of the best means for analysis of the very "uneven" data Shafer had available. Glover has used Swadesh's lexicostatistical system for glottochronology, based on differential retention over time of cognate forms with the same meaning. The number of such cognates in one or more daughter languages is presumed to shrink at a regular rate (with retention of 86 percent per millennium) as time goes by and the phonetically related words develop dissimilar meanings. (Discussions of the aims and methods of glottochronology are contained in Gudschinsky [1956] and Swadesh [1954].)

Glover's table is reproduced in Figure 1. The percentage of semantic and phonetic cognates shared by two or more diverging languages is noted, along with the date they are presumed to have separated. As

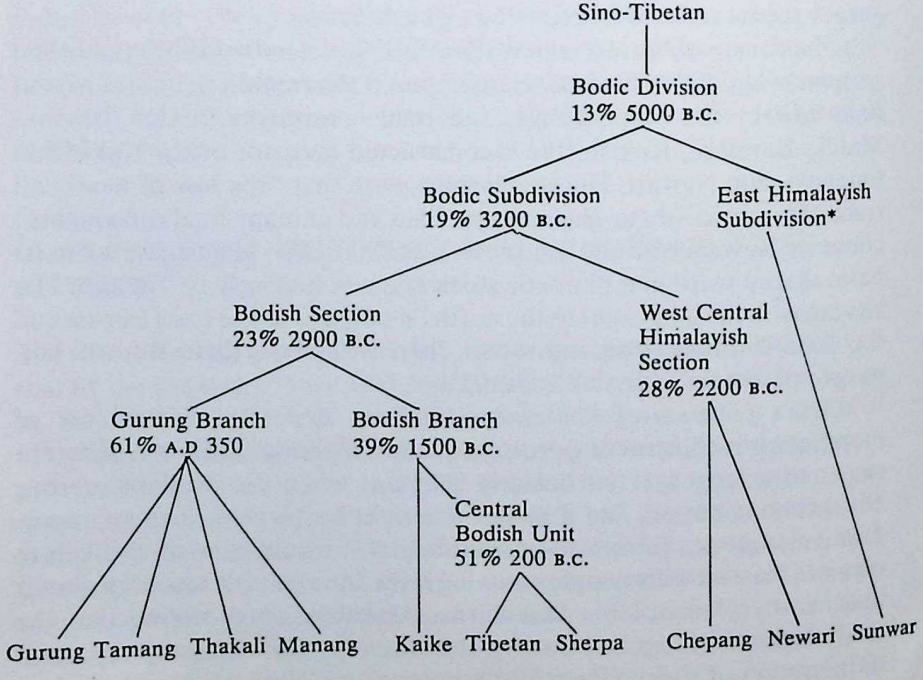

Figure 1. Relation of Newari to Sino-Tibetan
Source: Glover (1970) who has preserved Shafer's terminology.
* East Himalayish includes two or more branches.

Glover notes, the table is preliminary, especially with respect to its dates. Hymes (1964:571) cautions that glottochronological dates as such are unreliable "outside the span between 500 and 2,500 years."

Although Shafer often simply reworked material from the not always reliable Linguistic Survey, Glover utilized modern-day material collected in the field for lexicostatistical and other tests by members of the Summer Institute of Linguistics. The correspondences with Shafer's scheme are striking. If the dates are debatable but the chart of relationships is basically sound, next steps would be reconstruction of some of the presumed protoforms. These, in turn, should be compared with the results of Benedict's (1972) work, which covers more circumspectly the same ground as Shafer, with better organization and full utilization of new material where it is available.

LINGUISTIC EVIDENCE AND THE POSTULATED EARLY MOVEMENTS OF PEOPLES

Searching for a geographical connection for the linguistic material, we can place the ancient Newars, or the people from which they derived, at or near the head of a postulated arc of expansion of peoples. This arc leads from Kansu on the northeast through Southeastern and Southern Tibet along the Tsang-po and to Ladakh. Some of these peoples would have gone farther to the southeast (the Lolos and others) and some south to Burma and the Burman border areas; others would have followed the arc of relatively attractive territory through Southern Tibet itself. Movements were certainly slow and by fits and starts. The sequence of migration and the relations of the peoples mentioned (along with others) have not been worked out, and there were probably several main periods of expansion.

The heaviest "Tibetan" expansion along this southern-to-western arc came in the early centuries of the first millennium A.D. (Snellgrove and Richardson 1968). But the linguistic evidence suggests that the people or peoples that contributed the basic stratum of the present-day Newari speech were separated from this "Tibetan" group at a quite early period. They entered the Nepal Valley well in advance of the expansion that led through the time of the early Tibetan kings to the later reign of Songtsen gam-po. The position of Chepang in Glover's table, and the present-day distribution of Chepang remnants to the south of the Kathmandu Valley, suggest that there were at least two southward migrations into Nepal of the peoples speaking these "West Central Himalayish" languages. They may have migrated through the easy pass of about 6,500 feet elevation north of the valley, where the present-day Kodari road leads to the Tibetan border.

If we accept the foregoing outline of linguistic, historical, and geographical data as a framework, we have reason to connect the Newars with distinct cultural origins on the southern and eastern, or farming-cum-herding portion of the Tibetan plateau. Perhaps we can relate major aspects of their technical and social culture to what Stein (1972:95ff.) has suggested for the people there at an early period. However, such relations must await further work. The archaeological and linguistic data that will allow systematic analysis of material, cultural, and semantic complexes is only beginning to become available.

EVALUATION OF LEGENDS AND HISTORY REGARDING THE ORIGIN AND POPULATION OF THE VALLEY

The following legend is recorded as being told by the Newars themselves concerning the history of the valley and the coming of its people. It was translated from the Sanskrit by Hodgson (1874:115–117) with the help of Newar *pandits*. It is Hodgson's paraphrase of the original, and is presented here as an introduction to the tangled state of the history of the Kathmandu Valley. The portions in parentheses are from the marginal notations of earlier Newar commentators; the portions in brackets are my own condensations.

> . . . formerly the Valley of Nepaul was of circular form, and full of very deep water . . . Viswabhu [a Buddha, prophesied]: "In this lake [the goddess] Guhyeswari will be produced . . . and this place, through the blessings of Swayambhu, will become replete with villages, towns . . . and the inhabitants of various and diverse tribes. . . . The Bodhisattva [who will bring these people] is Manjusri, whose native place is very far off, towards the north, and is called Pāncha Sirsha Parvata [the Five Mountains] (which is situated in China). . . ."
>
> Manjusri reflected within himself: "Let me behold that sacred spot, and my name will long be celebrated in the world," and on the instant, collecting together his disciples, comprising a multitude of the peasantry of the land, and a Raja named Dharmakar, he . . . set out upon the long journey from Sirsha Parvata to Nāgā Vāsa [the name of the lake]. . . .
>
> Manjusri . . . having arrived . . . he began to circumambulate the lake . . . he struck the mountain with his scimitar, when the sundered rock gave passage to the waters, and the bottom of the lake became dry.

Lévi (1905: Intro., 221ff.) has separated the basic elements of this and other stories from their connection with names of deities that became known after, rather than before, the valley was populated. His summary of the complex of origin tales is: that there was an early immigration from the north, followed by migrations from India to the valley; that local tribes who were pastoral or shifting cultivators and who were at least near the valley before these immigrations tried from time to time to regain

control; and that, finally, in historic times, Rajputs from India and from the western hills were successful in establishing their own dynasties. Geologists, for their part, agree that the Kathmandu Valley was at one time a "Pleistocene" lake, fed by streams from the Himalayas (Dupuis 1972:108). The valley is still subject to earthquakes, sometimes severe ones, and an earthquake could easily have opened the single gap where today the waters of the valley's river systems are drained away to the south. Archaeological evidence with which to expand this outline is still very scanty.

In any case, the first Newars need not have come just at the time of the lake's draining. The Limbus and other groups, with their pronominalized languages, demonstrate that these mountain areas have been inhabited since the days of widespread Austro-Asiatic occupation in the subcontinent, and thus that the area has been populated since long before Vedic times. The memory of a lake having been there could come from these very early times, or it could be only a local speculation fostered by the valley's shape and by the large amounts of sediment which are quite evident everywhere.

Regmi (1960) feels that the first large-scale immigration to the valley was by an Indo-Mongolian people, which roughly followed Chatterji's proposed line of east-to-west migration in the lower Himalayan area. He places this first migration to the valley at about the seventh century B.C. (Regmi 1960:23ff.). Following this period, chronicles of kings and events in the valley speak of altercations with surrounding mountain peoples, some of whom were pastoralists, and who in some instances seem to have been Limbu tribes in the eastern hills of Nepal. A subsection of the Limbus calls itself the *Kirāntī,* and the name has been equated with the Vedic term *Kirātā* which was applied to the hillmen of these regions, as well as to more eastern and southern groups.

A summary of more recent times can be correlated with known events of Indian and North Indian history (see HMG 1969:42–47). In the third century A.D. Rajputs from the south had displaced the Limbus after one of their periods of control. Shortly thereafter a second plains group, the Licchavis — Indo-Mongolian but not Newars (see Regmi 1960:25–30) — established their own dynasty, which lasted until the twelfth century A.D. The Licchavis were replaced on the throne of the valley by another group, this time from the south and west: the Mallas, who took over in the thirteenth century A.D. The Malla Dynasty lasted until 1768. The present (Indic) rulers are Hindus. Their language, Nepali, is Sanskritic.

Regmi's summary of the history of the valley is well constructed, and solidly based on the textual and archaeological evidence which was available to him. But on the basis especially of the linguistic evidence we have just considered, it seems necessary to reject his thesis that the main immigration of the people whom we now call Newari was from the south

and east. We must allow general credence to the local tale stating that they came from the north. (We must, however, reject any suggestion that this point of origin was in fact "China".)

Without treating linguistic material in any detail but relying rather on Kautilya, Chinese travelers' reports, and other points mentioned above, Lévi also held that the Newars were a marginal "Tibetan" people at a very early time, and that they entered the valley as pastoralists and traders. But as he said the modern names of the valley and its people "Nepal" and "Newar" ("Nepal" first referred to the valley alone) cannot be traced to Tibetan etymologies. On both semantic and linguistic grounds the best derivation is Burton-Page's (1954) relation of the name "Nepal" and its derivative "Newar" to an Indian Prakrit form *nevāla* meaning the "country/people of a damp, low-lying area." The valley fits this description, in relation to the dry surrounding hills. And the name "Nepal" is first attested from Indian sources; it was probably applied first by southerners and then adopted.

But we must not connect Newari social structure too closely to the Indian sphere of influence. Chattopadhyay (1923:470) found the Newari caste system unlike the Indian system, especially in that occupational specialization in "general professions such as cultivation, petty trade, tailoring" is not enforced. He concluded that "the castes and hereditary occupational sections are in fact religious organizations as much as secular ones." The valley does not fit Marriott's (1965) proposed conditions for growth and elaboration of the Indian caste system. It seems simpler to accept the local traditions that the caste system was formally imposed on the Newars by a series of Indian-derived rulers in the medieval period.

PHUKI, *GUTHI*, AND CASTE

Ethnologically, the Newars should not be thought of as an "Indian," "Hindu," or "caste" society. Dumont (1961–1965, esp. 1964:97–98ff.) for example has described Newari marriage according to a "hierarchy-cum-endogamy" model and related exogamy in some Newar castes to the Newars' presence on the outer edges of the Indian culture area and their resulting incomplete repetition of the model. Rosser (1966), following a different line, examined the dynamics of caste mobility using Newari examples. Both demonstrate that the Newars are heavily influenced by Indian culture. But if the caste system is regarded as basic in these cases, we miss one of the benefits for social analysis that tracing Newari ethnic origins can provide. The Newars' own concern is not so much with caste as an organization which can serve both public and private functions, but with the *phuki* [lineage] organization and the services and support it provides. This is evident in Fürer-Haimendorf's discussion (1956); it

agrees with Chattopadhyay's observations that caste among the Newars does not conform to the Indian pattern. To Chattopadhyay the Newar castes' functions seemed to be religious: they furthered the communal celebration of a given religious festival. Occupational and religious specification are found *together* in India, and occupational limits are often the most stressed.

Undeniably, the Newars have castes. But we should recognize the presence of a local pattern for social organization in addition to this Indian pattern. We should also recognize its evident great age; and in analysis we should give the *phuki* organization and its derivatives importance equal to, or greater than, that of caste. The *phuki* as a basic pattern underlies a number of important arrangements (Fürer-Haimendorf 1956). The *phuki* is the organizing group for the very important *digu deo guthi* [lineage deity organization]. Other *guthi*s are organized for other purposes of ritual and for economic cooperation. Members seem often to be of the same *phuki,* but others are equally welcome if they are of the same caste (perhaps "status group" is a better term for the facts of the situation than is "caste"; see Rosser 1966). Membership can be either inherited or acquired in these groups; they are run on the pattern of the *digu deo guthi* with a headman or *thakali* and officers.

Turning to the northern culture area, B. Miller's (1956) discussion of *kidu* (*sKyid sdug* [happiness and misery, good and ill luck]) cooperative organizations formed by modern urban Tibetans both in Darjeeling and in Southern and Eastern Tibet recalls the Newari *guthi.* The Tibetans have *kidu*s, as the Newaris have *guthi*s, for mutual aid and fellowship in both ritual and economic matters. Both *kidu* and *guthi* membership can be either inherited (patrilineally) or achieved. As the *guthi*s are a phenomenon found in Nepal among the Newars, who are primarily dwellers in cities, so the *kidu* seems to be a basically urban Tibetan phenomenon. Some *guthi*s perform lineage rituals, and other groups in Nepal have lineage celebrations, called *devālī pūjā* in Nepali, for the *kuldevatā* or lineage god. But the focus of these other ceremonies, especially in their form among the Hindu Chetris of Nepal (K. B. Bista 1972) is primarily on the idea of the lineage as a genealogical reference point and not on the group itself. On the other hand, the Newars, to the extent that ethnographic reports on Nepal can guide us, form and multiply organizations of the *guthi* type where the main emphasis seems to be on the group itself. To what extent the Newari *guthi*s are a special and urban expression of a common Tibeto-Burman structure in Nepal is an open question, but seemingly one well worth pursuing.

CONCLUSIONS

This paper has emphasized the contributions that linguistic information, combined with material on basic social organizational patterns, can make to our knowledge of the ethnic origins of the Newars. A major ancestral portion of the Newari people seems to derive from the southeastern Tibetan sphere, at an early but uncertain date, and their entry into the valley was from the north and not from the south as an Indo-Mongolian group of less clearly northern origin. Further historical linguistic work on Newari and related languages will refine our knowledge of the circumstances and timing of the Newari immigration. Special attention should be given to semantic development in related clusters of words, in Newari and in related languages. Besides examination of social organizational terms, special attention should be given to words connected with subsistence techniques. Analysis of religious systems would also probably yield useful information. Much published data is scattered and incomplete, but much could be gained if such information, combined with information obtained in additional fieldwork, were integrated in further work on the hypotheses presented here.

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Symbolic Fields in Nepalese Religious Iconography: A Preliminary Investigation

RUTH L. SCHMIDT

A study of the religious symbolism of Nepal that focuses on its derivation from diverse cultural traditions introduces special problems for cultural anthropology. On the one hand, the diffusionist approach, which has been so popular in works dealing with interface areas, explains only the cultural product — the thing which diffuses (whether it is an art form, a song, or an idea). It does not explain how people perceive and understand that thing. The techniques of symbolic anthropology, on the other hand, attempt to describe the psychological reality of cultural products; but these methods of analysis are generally intracultural in design: they limit themselves to the relationship between specific symbolic systems and single cutures. Neither of these theoretical approaches adequately describe "syncretistic" or transcultural symbols from the point of view of *both* their historical derivation *and* their psychological reality.

For example, the Nepalese shrine to be considered in this paper, which consists of Śaivite Hindu and Tantric Buddhist elements, is susceptible of interpretation in at least four ways: (1) solely in the light of its Hindu context; (2) solely in the light of its Buddhist context; (3) as a blend or resolution of these two traditions; or (4) it may not be considered important to assign the shrine to a particular tradition. Preliminary responses to inquiries about this shrine seem to indicate that it is seen as an organic whole, as a single statement within the field of meaning most relevant to the individual, whether Hindu or Buddhist.

It is my thesis that transcultural symbols are not the accidental results of contact between two cultures, but that their syncretistic nature is meaningful and functional. To be synthesized, two symbols must possess something in common. The function of the syncretistic symbol, as I hope to demonstrate, is to translate this common core of meaning into diverse cultural codes: to provide a communication "bridge" between cultures.

THE ENVIRONMENT AND THE DATA

Syncretism in Nepalese art forms is only one manifestation of a remarkable efflorescence and cross-fertilization of religious ideas which took place in Newar culture. The religious iconography of the Newars became a vehicle for the expression of these ideas:

> Without considering religion and philosophy as a foundation, no genuine evaluation can be made of the basic character of Nepali art. The symbols of art here voice the same truth as philosophy and myth. Like that of India, Nepal has always aimed at achieving a synthesis of the dualities of life. Thus worldliness and spirituality are complementary not antagonistic in Nepali thought. In the same way, perhaps, life and art, the religious and the secular, even Buddhism and Brahmanism are not separate entities. But the growth of mandalas which give visual support to ritualistic meditation brought forth a new model of art. A circle within a square, enclosed by further concentric circle, then a square divided by diagonals into four triangles — an instrument or "yantra" for fulfilling certain purposes. This phase of art somehow represents a different spirit altogether (Ray 1967:10–11).

In the same spirit, modern Nepalese often say that there is little difference between Hinduism and Buddhism of the Nepalese type. This paper posits that this is essentially correct at the symbolic structural level, and examines an instance of "syncretistic" religious iconography to discover whether it contains a level of meaning at which "even Buddhism and Brahmanism are not separate entities."

This subject is so encompassing that arbitrary restrictions are in order. The data consist of a single shrine, which combines elements or motifs typical of both Hindu and Buddhist traditions. In doing this I am treating the shrine as a point of departure, a nexus of two distinct yet converging traditions. The shrine itself is more than that: it has its own history and uniqueness, which are perforce ignored in this kind of approach. However, at the risk of overgeneralizing about this particular shrine, I seek those characteristics common to all Nepalese shrines.

The description of the data will be insofar as possible in terms of traditional exegesis, supplemented by interview data obtained from helpful Nepalese.[1] I have not been able to view the shrine except in photographs, nor consult Nepalese religious specialists about it; consequently, this paper represents a preliminary investigation of the subject, in the hope that an expanded treatment of it will prove feasible at a later date. Such an analysis would take into account the results of an exhaustive

[1] I wish to express my appreciation to Dhruba N. Manandhar, Bidya and Janaki Pradhan, and Tulsi Uprety for their generous help in the form of information, comments, and lively interest. I am also much indebted to Professors Padmanabh Jaini, Lewis Lancaster, and Gary Tarr of the University of California, Berkeley, for their informative remarks and suggestions. Finally, thanks are due to William Stablein for calling my attention to the possibilities of the topic.

description of the many smaller images and ornamental motifs found in the shrine, as well as an observational account of its ritual function.

However, the main focus of this paper is on the psychological reality of the shrine for the Nepalese who is not a religious specialist, and not on the shrine's historical position. My purpose is not to augment existing data on Nepalese religious iconography, but to summarize what is already available in this one area, and to question whether we at present possess a metalanguage adequate for discussing it.

THE SHRINE

The shrine to be discussed is a stone sculpture found in a Buddhist Newar neighborhood of Kathmandu (see Plate 1). I have no date for it; it is

Plate 1. Shrine in a temple courtyard, Kathmandu. Photo: John Cepelak

reputed to have been built during the reign of Jayasthiti Malla. The pagoda-style temple in the background is dedicated to Aji Mā, the Hindu Mother Goddess of many aspects.

The bottom part of the sculpture consists of a sort of altar, identical in shape to that of the yoni in Śaivite iconography. A Nāga encircles the yoni: this is Ananta, the Endless (Kramrisch 1946:62ff.). Upon the yoni rests a lotus pedestal out of which rises a carved pillar surrounded by four figures, facing the four cardinal directions. Facing the viewer, and on his left, are Buddhas making the *bhumi-sparśa-mudrā* [touching the earth] with their right hands. Their left hands hold medicine pots, identifying them as Bhaiṣajya, the Medicine Buddha.[2] On the viewer's right (and presumably on the reverse as well), is a Buddha making what appears to be the *abhaya-mudrā* [bestowing protection].[3] Over his head is coiled Mucilinda, the giant cobra who sheltered the Buddha from a storm while the latter was in meditation following his enlightenment (Zimmer 1946:67–68). The Buddha figures are seated above a decorative band containing lions at the four corners. The visible side of the band contains two elephants and a musician.

Above the Buddha figures, another lotus pedestal supports a miniature dome (stupa) which is surrounded by an additional four Buddhas facing the four directions; the one facing the viewer appears to be making the *dharma-cakra mudrā* [turning the wheel of the law]. At the crown of the dome is the typical superstructure of the stupa: the four-sided *harmikā* and spire. On this miniature *harmikā*, invisible in the photograph, Avalokiteśwara's eyes look out over the earth as they do from the more famous stupas (see Plate 2). Snellgrove's comments about Swayambhunath are relevant here:

> The one umbrella which once crowned [the earliest Buddhist stupas] has become thirteen at Swayambhu. . . . Above them is placed a fully-formed umbrella and on the top of this is a solar disc within a crescent moon . . . On each of the four sides of the squared top-piece are depicted the all-seeing eyes of supreme buddhahood, surmounted by an arched flange [see Plate 3] on which appear the buddhas of the five families — Vairocana above the other four (Snellgrove 1957:96).

[2] Bhaiṣajya is defined in Edgerton's dictionary as the name of a Tathagata who is very prominent in the Lotus Sutra (Edgerton 1953:412). Kern notes that "This quality [mighty knowledge and impetuosity] stamps Bhaishagyarâga as Rudra. . . . He is essentially the same with Dhanvantari the physician, Arcitenens Apollo. He is, moreover, the same with Gadgadasvara, who is represented as breath of life" (Kern 1963:404ff). Rudra is an aspect of Śiva (the power of destruction; see Danielou 1964:204). Thanks are due to Professor Lancaster for this information.

[3] This is one of those areas where additional data would be most desirable; it is however not essential for the main argument of the paper, which rests on the numerical symbolism of the shrine. Insofar as the figure can be seen in the photograph, the *mudrā* seems to be the *abhaya*; however, two of the Nepalese consulted were of the opinion it is the *dharma-cakra*. Perhaps the *abhaya* would accord better with the presence of Mucilinda, the protecting Nāga.

Plate 2. Swayambhunath, the *harmikā* and spire. Photo: John Cepelak

If the reader looks carefully at the shrine he will see the faint outlines of the "arched flange" described by Snellgrove. The characteristics of the top portion of the shrine thus appear to be within the tradition of the great stupas, which is how they are understood by the Nepalese whom I interviewed.

I asked four Nepalese — a Buddhist Newar, a Hindu Newar, and two Hindu Brahmans — to describe the shrine to me. Their statements made it clear that the syncretistic nature of the shrine was of little or no importance to them. For the Buddhist it was a 100 percent" Buddhist shrine; one Brahman said it looked like a Hindu shrine (citing the "liṅga, lotus and snake"). The other Brahman called it "a good sign of the mixture of two different religions, Buddhist and Hindu," and added,

"Buddha's statue is on the stone which is used only for Śiva liṅga." He qualified this by saying that in his personal view it was a specifically Buddhist shrine, possibly with anti-Hindu overtones. The Hindu Newar said that it made no difference whether the shrine was Hindu or Buddhist. All of them except the Buddhist identified it as consisting of the following elements: *liṅgam-yoni*, Buddhas facing the four directions, dome with *harmikā*, and spire. The Buddhist did not identify any *liṅgam-yoni* element in the shrine.

The shrine is worshiped by all three communities, primarily when the nearby temple is visited (one of the Brahmans, however, said that he would not actually worship at the shrine, although he would show his respect for it by circumambulating it if he happened to pass by it). The Hindu Newar said that in his case, one of his ancestors had placed a piece of land in *guthi* [trust] to pay for the expenses of continued annual worship at the temple; and that each year the responsibility of conducting a *puja*, with accompanying feast, devolved in turn upon one of the man's descendants. As the wealth of the temple must be shown in an intact condition during the puja, this custom would seem to have functional aspects. In any event, the shrine is worshiped at the same time the *puja* is held in the temple.

Professor P. Jaini comments that the integration of Buddhist and Śaivite elements was characteristic of the Gorakhnātha cult of Nepal, and that in this case no phallic symbolism is implied in the apparent presence of the *liṅgam-yoni*. The *yoni* here functions as a vessel for the holy water; had this part of the sculpture been carved in the shape of a lotus, a further integration of the two systems could have been posited (Jaini, personal communication). In that case one might have asked whether it was even intended by the artists as a *yoni*. However, as the lotus stands above the yoni, and as this part of the shrine is identified as a *lingam-yoni* by the Nepalese whom I questioned, I shall argue that the *meaning* of this portion of the shrine is the same as the meaning of the Śaivite emblem associated with Śiva and Śakti, the union of the polarities of substance and energy.

As a preliminary step I hope to isolate some common themes or motifs shared by both the Śaivite and Buddhist elements of the shrine. Following this I will examine the numerical symbolism which is embedded in both, to discover a common core of meaning present throughout the shrine.

THE PAIRS OF OPPOSITES

Śiva-Śakti as *liṅgam-yoni* expresses the dynamic condition which obtains when the complementing polarities of the universe are united:

We have seen that the universal substratum was called the Immensity (*brahman*) and that the mechanical potentiality of manifestation lay in the form of opposing tendencies represented as cohesion (Viṣṇu) and disintegration (Śiva), their balance, the space-time creating principle, being known as the Immense-Being (Brahmā).

The tension between the opposites from which motion arises in the substratum is depicted as the first appearance of energy (śakti). It is from manifest energy, and not merely from the opposition from which it springs forth, that existence arises (Danielou 1964:253).

Śakti is also seen as matter (Prakṛti), the earth as a source of life; Śiva is seen as consciousness (Puruṣa). In this interpretation the mental activity of Śiva, which is fiery, is complemented by the inertia of Śakti, which is watery. Thus, the *liṅgam-yoni* also describes the union of existence and consciousness.

This symbolism of the pairs of opposites is also expressed in temples: both in the Hindu temple, where the square enclosure symbolizes the order which governs all life on earth (Kramrisch 1946:42); and in the Buddhist stupa.

In the Hindu temple, the polarities of the universe are in balance. The world is ordered, but static:

> The square is the essential and perfect form of Indian architecture. It presupposes the circle and results from it. Expanding energy shapes the circle from the centre; it is established in the shape of the square. The circle and curve belong to life and its growth and movement. The square is the mark of order, of finality, to the expanding life, its form, and of perfection beyond life and death (Kramrisch 1946: 22).

> Measure implies limits and limits mean end and death. It is by man's own, mortal frame that this knowledge of the universe is confirmed. The square, form of finality, is at the same time that of the pairs of opposites; manifestation is only through the pairs of contraries and in their balance lies the perfection of the square (Kramrisch 1946:43).

It is creative cosmic energy, here symbolized by the event of sexual union, which transforms this balance into the activity and flux of life.

In the Buddhist stupa, the generativity of the dome contrasts with the transcendality of the spire. The dome is like an egg: the creative power of matter. The spire is the tree of enlightenment: human consciousness and cosmic order; so again matter is united with consciousness. However, the symbolism of the stupa is explicitly transformational, for the *harmikā*, the cube-shaped base of the spire, is considered as a sacrificial altar:

> The resemblance of the *harmikā* to a sacrificial altar is perhaps not unintentional, because the Holy One, instead of sacrificing other beings, sacrifices himself to the world. . . .
>
> From the standpoint of the sacrificial altar also, the later idea, which compares

the harmikā with fire, gets a new significance. Even the eyes on the harmikā of Nepalese stūpas fit into this symbolism, because according to the Tantras, fire (agni) corresponds to the eye (faculty of vision, also of inner vision) (Govinda 1940:3–4).

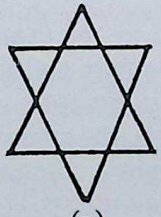
> And as the Phoenix rises from the ashes so the tree of life and enlightenment grows out of the ashes of the sacrificial altar . . . which crowns the dome, the monumental world-egg and the womb of a new world which has been fecundated by the seeds of a glorious past, receiving the dhātus, the potential elements for the spiritual rebirth of the world (Govinda 1940:19).

Again we have the theme of the "motherhood of matter" (Govinda 1940: 16); but here, matter is not merely united with consciousness to generate life; it is transformed in the sacrificial fire to become enlightenment.

These transformational qualities may be made more accessible by comparing the numerical symbolism of the Śaivite and Buddhist elements of the shrine. This numerical symbolism is associated with the geometry of the mandala, as most of the elementary geometrical shapes are considered to have a corresponding numerical as well as symbolic value (Danielou 1964:350–354). Moreover, numerical symbolism is not only a feature of Nepalese shrines and temples, but of the culture in general, being found also in secular structures, such as residential buildings.[4]

The *liṅgam* may be represented geometrically, as a triangle with its apex upward: The numerical value of this triangle is considered as 3. The *yoni* is represented as a triangle with its apex downward, and its numerical value is 2 (Danielou 1964:352). The first triangle represents Puruṣa, the second stands for Prakṛti:[5]

> When these two unite and are in a state of balance, they form the star hexagon, basis of the wheel symbol of the third tendency or revolving tendency (*rajas*) from which the universe is manifested [a] . . . when the two triangles separate [b], the world is destroyed. . . . This is shown by the hourglass shape, the drum of Śiva (Danielou 1964:353–354).



(a)

(b)

[4] The structure of the Newar house seems to be dominated by four symbolism. Its four *talas*, or stories, are distinguished according to the degree of ritual purity that must be maintained in them; and during its construction a *puja* must be performed following the completion of each story. For further information see G. S. Nepali (1965).

[5] The star hexagon also occurs in Nepalese Buddhist *pujas*, where it stands for the union of *upāya* [means] and *prajñā* [insight]. Five cooked foods are offered in a pot on top of this hexagon (Stablein, this volume).

The star hexagon is to be distinguished from an ordinary hexagon, which connotes only activity on the inanimate level (such as the movement of air). This is clear from the significance of its numerical value, 6. The prime number 3, and its multiples by 2 and 3, are believed to rule inanimate life.

> Life, sensation, appears only when the number 5 becomes a component of the inner structure of things. The number 5 is associated with Śiva, the progenitor, the source of life. The pentagon [star] is thus associated with love and lust as well as the power of disintegration. It is a necessary element of most magic yantras (Danielou 1964:353).

The value of the ordinary hexagon is obtained by the equation ($2 \times 3 = 6$) or ($3 \times 2 = 6$). As noted above, the square is obtained by the equation ($2 \times 2 = 4$). Both represent an essentially static condition. The union of the liṅgam-yoni, however, gives us ($3 + 2 = 5$).

The shrine, because it is generically a temple, has a square as its fundamental plan. The symbolism of the *liṅgam-yoni* augments this. Therefore, in this icon a 4 is contained within a 5, which represents a dynamic evolution of its potential.

The numerical symbolism of the Buddhist elements of the shrine contains different patterns. Here we generally have a mandala with "families" of Buddhas placed at the four cardinal directions and at the center (although this is the basic structure they are not always depicted in this way; see Plate 3). By "families" of Buddhas I refer to a fivefold differentiation of the universe into components in sets of five: five components of Buddhahood, five of personality, five of spatiality, five of good and five of evil, and so forth. Each of these components is associated with a particular Buddha family; for example, the east, the color blue, a type of wisdom (mirrorlike), and a type of evil (wrath), etc. are associated with the Vajra family of the Buddha Akhṣobhya. The center, white, a type of wisdom (pure absolute), and type of evil (stupidity) are associated with the Tathāgata family of Vairocana — and so on around the mandala (Mkhas Grub Rje 1968:101–103; Snellgrove 1957:64–67).[6] Moreover, in Nepalese Buddhist *pujas* items frequently occur in units of five; for, example, in ceremonial medicine there are five medicines, five grains, five jewels, five kinds of incense, and five essences (William Stablein, personal communication).

The basic type of mandala consists of Vairocana at the center and the others, Ratnasambhava, Amitābha, Amogasiddhi, and Akhṣobhya, in the southern, western, northern and eastern quarters respectively. Snell-

[6] Snellgrove says that this fivefold differentiation of phenomena is not typical of early Buddhism, in which there were only three kinds of evil, three kinds of wisdom, three Buddha families, etc. Govinda makes the same point (Snellgrove 1957:65; Govinda 1940: 15). The evolution of five Buddha families out of a previous three would be all the more interesting in the light of symbolic structural considerations.

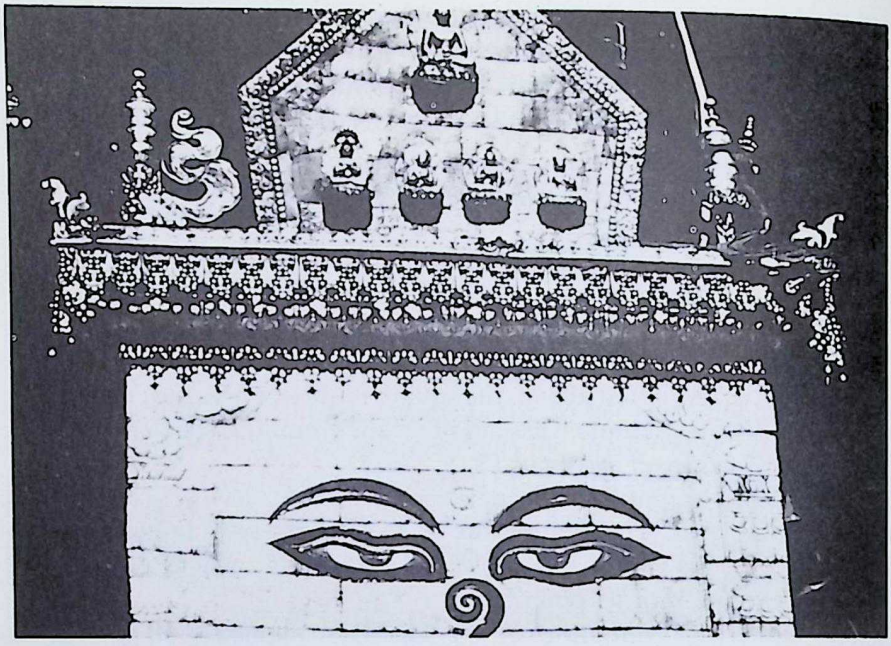


Plate 3. Swayambhunath, the arched flange with Buddha figures. Photo: USAID/Nepal

grove notes that in later tantras it is Akhṣobhya who is placed in the center of the mandala; however, the overall pattern remains the same (Snellgrove 1957:74): it is that of four Buddhas encircling a fifth, who is central; or of four Buddhas seated below a fifth, who excels them (see also Tucci 1971:49–60).

The mandala is protected by fierce deities stationed in each quarter of the compass, and there are gentle and wrathful, male and female, deities in each family. The concept again is of the compensatory qualities of life and the transformational quality of the ritual: thus evil deities defend good ones, and evil is transformed into good; the masculine qualities of the Buddhas are compensated by the feminine ones of their partners (except that the feminine is visualized somewhat differently as compared with Śaivism: as *prajñā* [wisdom], instead of *śakti*). The personality of the meditator realizes its transcendent function through confrontation of its evil potential (George 1972:1–8), or through the integration of its masculine and feminine components (Snellgrove 1957:88–89).

Despite the differences in pattern, then, both the Hindu and the Buddhist elements of the shrine make a similar statement, namely, that out of what is represented by the number 4 — the static balance of the polarities of life — emerges that which is represented by the number 5: the quintessential, dynamic potential of life. The 4 is transformed into a 5;

in visual terms this transformation is depicted as the sexual event, in Śaivite Hinduism; and as the sacrificial altar with its fire, in Buddhism. In Tantric Buddhism it is also symbolized by the central position of Vairocana in the mandala, and by the union of the Buddhas with their partners.

CONCLUSION

I hope to have demonstrated that the common core of meaning in the diverse visual symbols of the shrine consists (at least) of a resolution of the opposition between matter and consciousness, and also in the statement that an idea signified by the number 4 is transformed into one signified by the number 5. Are these statements useful or relevant for cultural anthropologists?

Structuralists who regard the mind as using a binary code would be able to formulate numerous oppositions from the above data, for example (to name a few):

lingam : *yoni* :: consciousness : matter

or

spire : stupa :: consciousness : matter

nor would the autochthonous qualities of the stupa be overlooked. But merely to follow up on the second example, does the *harmikā* function as a mediator in the sense of Leach's definition:

> In every myth system we will find a persistent sequence of binary discriminations, as between human/superhuman, mortal/immortal, male/female, legitimate/illegitimate, good/bad . . . followed by a "mediation" of the paired categories thus distinguished.
>
> "Mediation" (in this sense) is always achieved by introducing a third category which is "abnormal" or "anomalous" in terms of the ordinary "rational" categories. Thus myths are full of fabulous monsters, incarnate gods, virgin mothers. This middle ground is abnormal, non-natural, holy. It is typically the focus of all taboo and ritual observance (Leach 1967:4).

According to this argument the *harmikā*, which is neither stupa nor spire, egg nor tree, matter nor consciousness, would be considered a mediator; but this argument stops at the merely paradoxical, without permitting us to say anything about the *transformational* qualities of the *harmikā*. For example (to turn the argument around and examine the structuralist hypothesis in the light of the Nepalese numerical symbolism), an unmediated binary opposition would have the value of an even number, and represent a static condition. A square is the best example of this. The addition of a mediator means that something has happened to the square: it is no longer the "mark of order, of finality" (Kramrisch 1946:22) but

becomes the star hexagon of the mandala. It is precisely this quality of dynamic change which eludes the structuralist hypothesis.

On the other hand, the structuralist approach may help to clarify one major difficulty in obtaining and analyzing symbolic data of the type discussed here. That is the difficulty of obtaining indigenous exegesis based on the opinion of laymen (exoteric), as well as that based on the opinion of ritual specialists or on interpretations of traditional texts (esoteric). As Turner points out, both are important (Turner 1967: 50–51); however in practice few studies of Nepalese or Indian symbolic systems distinguish esoteric from exoteric exegesis (no doubt because the latter is often not available). Furthermore, laymen tend to give simpler explanations for things (Turner 1967:45); the precise nature of the transcultural features of our shrine would have been inaccessible at the exoteric level of interpretation.

Structuralists assume that the symbolic meaning of cultural phenomena is not entirely accessible at the conscious level; that there is an unconscious infrastructure as well, and that the latter is "more genuine and important than the conscious explanation" (Rossi 1973: 23–26). If this is so, it prompts us to ask whether transcultural elements of symbol systems are not precisely those which are *most likely* to be unconscious, and therefore inaccessible at the exoteric level. It is also possible that the function of a ritual specialist is to keep track of clues about the unconscious structure of the culture's symbolic productions by referring them to similar concepts in religious texts, oral traditions, or ritual practices.

It may be argued that we cannot investigate unconscious symbolic structures without trespassing on territory which has traditionally been presided over by the various schools of depth psychology.[7] Even so, if we wish to examine transcultural phenomena we must take notice of universals; if we search out only historical facts or culturally normative interpretations, that is all we will get. I am cognizant of Turner's warning on this score:

> Here we come to the confines of our present anthropological competence, for we are now dealing with the structure and properties of psyches, a scientific field traditionally studied by other disciplines than ours. At one end of the symbol's spectrum of meanings we encounter the individual psychologist and the social psychologist, and even beyond them (if one may make a friendly tilt at an envied friend), brandishing his Medusa's head, the psychoanalyst, ready to turn to stone the foolhardy interloper into his caverns of terminology (Turner 1967:46).

[7] In this light it is extremely interesting to note the work of Jung on alchemy. The quadripartite differentiation of the universe (and the human personality) is bound together by a fifth element, the *quinta essentia* or quintessential, which excels the other four elements (Jung 1967:107–188).

Perseus is in an enviable position indeed, but it is well to remember that even the Medusa was not invincible, when confronted with the proper weapons.[8]

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[8] The reader is invited to investigate the resemblances between the face of the Medusa and that of the Kīrttimukha, the "Face of Glory" which as an aspect of the fierce form of Śiva (Rudra) is depicted on temples and shrines to ward off evil (Zimmer 1962:181–182). The Medusa's head, once severed, protects Perseus from his enemies. Note also in the context of the reference to alchemy (above, note 7), that Perseus carried a sword given him by Hermes (Mercurius) when he slew the Medusa. Mercurius for the alchemists was the *prima materia*, containing all the potential opposites. The sign for Mercurius is a square inside a triangle surrounded by a circle — symbol of totality (Jung 1967:224).

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Intercaste Relations in a Newar Community

GÉRARD TOFFIN

We intend to examine the relations between a community of Newar farmers of the Kathmandu Valley and the main castes with which it comes into contact. After briefly presenting the community, we will describe how this group situates itself in the caste hierarchy. We will then analyze the functions and dynamics of the relations between castes in the fields of economy and religion.

THE COMMUNITY

Pyangaon, the village we studied, lies about 15 kilometers south of Patan, at the extreme limit of the Kathmandu Valley. It belongs to the panchayat of Chapagaon, where it is represented by a delegate elected by the whole population. In 1971, the village included seventy-six houses grouped together along its only street. At the entrance of the village there is a buffalo pool. Northwest of this pool, about 300 meters from Pyangaon, stands a solitary group of seven houses. This hamlet is socially attached to the village.

There is a population of roughly 500. All the inhabitants are *jyāpu*, a caste of Newar farmers[1] which is the largest in the Kathmandu Valley:

We stayed eight months in Pyangaon, from August 1971 to April 1972. This mission was financed by the R.C.P. 253 "Ecologie et Géologie de l'Himalaya Central" (C.N.R.S.), which we should like to thank here, together with its Director, M. Corneille Jest. A second mission of the R.C.P. 253 enabled us to spend another three weeks in Pyangaon in summer 1973.

[1] The word *jyāpu* is said to mean: "(those people) working the rice" (from *jyā* [work] and *pu* [a very current type of rice in the Kathmandu Valley]); cf. Nepali (1965:166).

According to P. R. Bajracharya (personal communication 1970), the word *jyāpu* could come from *jyā* [work] and *bum̐* [field]; the caste's name would then mean: "fieldwork".

120,000 persons living in 37,000 houses (Rosser 1966:88). It represents 42 percent of the whole Newar population (Rosser 1966:86). The village does not have any skilled craftsmen, shops, or merchants. This situation is fairly exceptional in the Kathmandu Valley, where the Newar communities usually consist of several castes, each with extremely precise profane and sacred duties to perform.

All the villagers are farmers. Another activity, however, plays an important part in the village economy: the manufacture of bamboo boxes — in Nepali, *pyāṅg*; (in Newari *dyā* or *dyahā* — used to measure out grain in volume (wheat, paddy rice, corn, etc.). This craft is one of Pyangaon's specialities. The village formerly had a monopoly on it for the whole of the Kathmandu Valley. As we will see, the making of *pyāṅg* is linked with the origin of the village. Pyangaon, the community's Nepali name, literally means: "the bamboo boxes village." *Pyāṅg* played an important part in the past. In the dry season the peasants used to set off for the Mahabharat Mountains and the plains of the Terai to look for good quality bamboo. These journeys have ceased today and box making is in full decline. The efforts made by the government to standardize weights and measures and to protect the forests from being cleared have dealt a fatal blow to this activity. Only a few old men can still make *pyāṅg*. Today the income earned is only enough to buy cigarettes and spices in the neighboring village's bazaar.

Pyangaon consists of five patriclans. The word patriclan is used here in a sense currently accepted in social anthropology, that is, a kinship group whose filiation is transmitted by men. The Newars of Pyangaon designate such a kinship group by the word *gwā*. They also used sometimes the word *guṭhi* which refers normally only to religious organizations,[2] and the word *khala* or *khalak* which means "household."[3] The Nepali word *thar*,[4] which is quite widespread in the hills, is never used in this context.

The five patriclans are named as follows: Parba, Ta, Bu, Aca, and Wosikar. The first four are śivamargi, i.e., they call on a Hindu priest (in Newari, *barmu*; in Nepali *bāhun*) to celebrate their most important rituals. The fifth is buddhamargi; it calls on a Buddhist priest. As the legend of the village's origin goes, the first four patriclans originate in Pulan Sankhu, a hamlet one day's walk away, southwest of the valley. The members of the last patriclan, the Wosikar, are supposed to have come from the village Makal Kuca (or Makal Danda), a day-and-a-half's walk away, southeast of the valley. The patriclans are exogamous. Marriage is not banned between them, or between the Buddhist minority and the

[2] *Guṭhi* comes from the Sanskrit *goṣṭhī* meaning a society or an association; cf. Regmi (1967:vol. 4:3).

[3] *Khalak* is a word of Indian origin. Jorgensen (1936:44) gives "a flock, troop"; Turner (1931:116) gives "family, household."

[4] *Thar* "clan, tribe, class, subcaste" (Turner 1931:294).

Hindu majority. The head of the patriclan, the *thakāli* (in Newari), is the group's oldest member.

THE HIERARCHY CRITERIA

The *jyāpu* of Pyangaon divide the whole Newar society into two classes: the *ju pi* (short for *la cale ju pi* [persons from whom water can be accepted]) and the *ma ju pi* (or *la cale ma ju pi*) [persons from whom water cannot be accepted]. This is a basic opposition; it divides the whole of Newar society into pure and impure castes.[5]

The Ju Pi

The lists of pure castes that we gathered in Pyangaon always included the following: first, at the top of the hierarchy, we find the *thapi* (literally in Newari, "the high persons"), i.e., the *barmu* (Hindu priests) and the *gubhāju* (Buddhist priests). Then, in the following order, we have: the *bare* [goldsmiths], the *shreṣṭha* [merchants], the *jyāpu* [farmers], the *sāymi* [oil pressers], the *pahi* [basketmakers], the *nau* [barbers], the *citrakār or puṅ* [painters], the *kau* [blacksmiths], and the *bhā*.[6] Some people add to this list the *udās* [Buddhist merchants and craftsmen] and the *gaṭhū* [gardeners], giving the former a higher status and the latter a lower one. If we compare it with those drawn up by Hodgson (Chattopadhyay 1923:550–556) or Oldfield (1880:vol. 1:184–185) in the nineteenth century, this list is relatively short. It is not meant to be a complete list of the Newar castes but it names those most frequently mentioned by the village peasants. It is therefore quite normal that it should not include the names of the castes with which the *jyāpu* of Pyangaon do not have any contact or which do not exist in the panchayat of Chapagaon. It should also be noted that a number of castes have disappeared or have been disappearing since the nineteenth century.

What criteria enable the *jyāpu* of Pyangaon to situate themselves in relation to any one of the above castes? Four main ones can be mentioned: cooked food, marriage, access to the different floors of the house, and the hookah.

Cooked food is the most important point. It can be used on its own to

[5] Colin Rosser (1966:88) was the first to show this opposition among the Newars.

[6] According to Chattopadhyay, who borrows this definition from Hodgson, the *bhā* "take the death gifts on the eleventh day and eat a bit of the corpse. They dye woollens and cotton with red colour. They should not cultivate or keep shop, but do both now" (Chattopadhyay 1923:556).

We should note that Gopal Singh Nepali (1965:172–173) classes incorrectly the *bhā* as *ma ju pi*, that is to say, "persons from whom water cannot be accepted."

establish a hierarchy in the Newar castes. Cooked food in this context means boiled rice (in Newari, *jā*). Rice flakes (in Newari, *baji*; in Nepali, *ciurā*), grilled on the fire for a few minutes before being crushed in a mortar, can be accepted from everyone. Boiled rice, on the other hand, is subject to extremely strict bans. It is the preeminent food, the most likely one to be defiled, which has to be cooked with the greatest care: it will be defiled if a lower caste person even looks at it. In the caste rules, *jā* is associated with pea or lentil soup, which is normally served with it at meals. To situate a person in the hierarchy, the first question asked will be: "Do you accept rice cooked by such and such a caste?" Thus, the *jyāpu* of Pyangaon will not accept rice cooked by the *sāymi*, the *pahi*, the *nau,* and, in general, by all the lower castes. On the other hand, they will accept rice cooked by the *shreṣṭha*, the *bare*, the *gubhāju*, the *barmu*, and by all the higher castes. Inversely, in order to retain their place at the top of the hierarchy, the *gubhāju* and the *barmu* will not accept rice cooked by the *jyāpu.* The rules of commensality between the peasants of Pyangaon and of the neighboring villages, which are more intricate, will be examined later.

The cooked food is sometimes not sufficient to determine a specific group's position in the hierarchy. Other criteria, marriage especially, must then be taken into account. Thus, the *jyāpu* of Patan often say that they will not marry the Kathmandu peasants because the latter are used to marry *sāymini* [oil presser women]; for them such a marriage would be immediately followed by an excommunication from their caste system. It is well known, on the other hand, that the *gubhāju,* the Buddhist priests, will accept rice cooked by the *bare*, whereas these two groups do not always intermarry (Nepali 1965:153). Endogamy is a means, here, of acquiring a slight superiority or of disputing the equality of another caste or subcaste. Marriage with a person of another caste automatically entails a fall in the hierarchy. The situation at Pyangaon is exactly the same: nearly the whole village is endogamous; the peasants, whether man or woman, do not marry outside the community. If they do so, they can be expelled from it.

As for marriage, access to the different floors of the house is governed by the caste rules. Each floor of the house represents a certain degree of purity or impurity, establishing a hierarchy between the social groups. "Persons from whom water can be accepted," but with a lower status than the *jyāpu* (like the *sāymi*, *pahi*, *nau*, etc.), are only admitted to the first floor. If they have to be fed, they will be fed on this floor. There are some exceptions however: the barber who is well known and lives very near the village, is often allowed to go up to the second floor. But if he does, he must stay as close as possible to the stairwell and in some cases he has to stay on the stairs.

The *shreṣṭha*, the *bare*, and all castes equal to or higher than the *jyāpu*

are received on the second floor of the house. They will eat in this room. On the other hand, they will not be allowed to enter the kitchen which is nearly always on the top floor, under the rafters. Only the Pyangaon villagers are allowed into the kitchen. Even the *jyāpu* of neighboring villages are theoretically not allowed in. Persons with whom regular relations are maintained may be allowed on occasion to infringe upon this rule, but only if no rice is being cooked.

A final criterion is the possibility of, or the ban on, smoking tobacco together in a hookah (in Newari, *hukkā*). In Pyangaon, only the villagers may share a complete hookah. If the pipe is to be smoked with a *jyāpu* from a neighboring village, the stem is removed and the other person has to smoke directly at the base of the pipe. When a *hukkā* is smoked with *shreṣṭha* or with the barber, all the parts are removed and only the bowl (*cilam*) is presented. Persons belonging to much higher castes, such as Buddhist and Hindu priests insert a leaf between their mouth and the lower orifice of the bowl. The Kathmandu *shreṣṭha* (the *rāj bhaṇḍāri* especially) use the same method with the Pyangaon villagers. The hookah is therefore another way of classifying people within a certain system. Each of the *hukkā*'s parts represents a degree of social distance.

The Ma Ju Pi

Who are the *ma ju pi*, "the persons from whom water cannot be accepted"? The lists differ from author to author, from period to period, from district to district, and even among informants belonging to the same village. The 1955 Nepalese Code includes among the castes from which water is not accepted: the *kasāi* [butchers, milk merchants]; the *kusle* [musicians, tailors]; the *kulū* [leather dressers, drum-makers]; the *poḍe* [fishermen]; and the *cyāmakhalak* [scavengers] (see Macdonald 1970:139–152). Sylvain Levi, reproducing Oldfield's list (1880: 184–185), mentions eight Newar castes "underneath the waterline": the *kasāi*; the *jugi* (*joghi* means "musicians, tailors"); the *dhunt* [feast musicians]; the *dhauwi* [coke-makers]; the *kulū* (*kullu*); the *poḍe* (*poḍhya*); the *cyāmakhalak* (*chamakallak*) [skin-dressers and sweepers]; and the *saṃghat* (*sanghar* or *songat*) [launderers] (Levi 1905:244). Gopal Singh Nepali mentions the *dwiṁ* (*dun yeeya*; they earn their livelihood as workers in stone quarries and by selling firewood and red soil); the *balami*;[7] the *saṁghat* (*sanga* or *sangat*); the *bhā* (Nepali 1965:174); the

[7] *Balami*: "the *balami* occupies the foothills (of the valley) and is especially to be found at Kagategaon, at Balaji. These people claim to be formerly of Kshatriya caste" (Nepali 1965:174). In fact, neither the *balami*, nor the *dwiṁ*, belong to the group of impure castes.

kasāi; the *kusle* (or *jogi*); the *poḍe* (*pore*); the *kulū* (*kullu*); the *cyāmakhalak* (*chyame*); and the *hārā huru*.[8]

We collected the following list in Pyangaon: *nāy* (*kasāi*), *kulū*, *doṁ*,[9] *jugi*, *pwo* (*poḍe*), and *cyāmakhalak*.

Is there a hierarchy between these castes? According to Mulikī Ain's code, a distinction must be made between the persons from whom water cannot be accepted but contact with whom does not require purification by sprinkling of water, and those from whom water cannot be accepted and contact with whom does require purification by sprinkling (Macdonald 1970:145–147). The first category would include the *kasāi*, the *kusle*, and the *kulū*. The second would include the *poḍe* and the *cyāmakhalak* (Macdonald 1970:145–146). Does this distinction exist with the Newars? Nepali thinks it does, and mentions a group of unclean, nonuntouchable castes (unclean castes) which includes the *dwiṁ*, the *balami*, the *saṁghat*, the *bhā*, the *kasāi*, and the *kusle*; and a group of unclean, untouchable castes (untouchable castes) which includes the *poḍe*, the *kulū*, the *cyāmakhalak*, and the *hārā huru* (Nepali 1965:150).

We are not in a position to assess the pertinence of this criterion to the whole of Newar society. Even in Pyangaon, the matter is far from clear. Most of the peasants say that the distinction between persons with whom contact requires purification (in Newari, *ti ma ju pi*) and those with whom contact does not require purification (in Newari, *ti ju pi*) belongs to the past. It is not taken into account in everyday life. All *ma ju pi* can be touched without the person touching them having to purify himself by sprinkling water over the head; the only important point is knowing whether the caste is *ju pi* or *ma ju pi*, in other words whether it is "above or below the waterline." In fact, the farmers are quite incapable of establishing a hierarchy between these castes. The only thing they all seem to agree on is that the *cyāmakhalak* rank lowest in the hierarchy.

On the other hand, for other persons, especially the *thakāli* and older people, the criterion of touch is important; it is frequently used in everyday life to settle relations between castes. Thus, among the persons from whom water is not accepted, there are three castes — the musicians' *doṁ*, the *pwo*, and the *cyāmakhalak* — contact with which requires purification by sprinkling of water.[10] The members of these castes are also not allowed to enter the house. In addition, if a person belonging to one of these castes touches a brass receptacle, it has to be purified with water and ashes. If the receptacle is an earthenware object, it has to be broken.

[8] *Hārā huru*: "it (the *cyāmkhala*) has a section lower in rank, which is said to be the result of the union between a *cyāmkhala* and another untouchable caste like *pore*. This section is known as *hārā-huru*" (Nepali 1965:178).

[9] *doṁ*, from *ḍhōlak* [drummer]?

[10] According to Nepali (1965:190), this purification "consists of sprinkling over the polluted person some water in which a piece of gold has been dipped."

It should be noted that if a man belonging to a pure caste marries a *ma ju pi* girl, he will become himself an "untouchable," and that sexual intercourse may not be had with a woman belonging to one of these castes without a payment of a fine.[11] Boiled rice or any other foodstuff cooked in water may not be accepted from them. Finally, a hookah may not be shared with a *ma ju pi,* even if only the bowl is used.

	ju pi
barmu — gubhāju *bare* *shreṣṭha — udās* *jyāpu* *sāymi* *pahi — gaṭhū* *nau* *puṁ* (or *citrakār*) *kau* *bhā*	
nāy — kulū *jugi* (or *kusle*)	*ma ju pi* (*ti ju pi*)
doṁ *pwo* *cyāmakhalak*	(*ti ma ju pi*)

Figure 1. Hierarchy of the Newar castes according to the inhabitants of Pyangaon

INTERCASTE RELATIONS: FUNCTIONS AND DYNAMICS

After defining the criteria enabling the groups to determine their own hierarchy and describing the position of the Pyangaon farmers with regard to all the Newar castes, we will now examine the type of economic and ritual relations these castes maintain with Pyangaon. With each caste, we will try to show to what extent the caste criteria and the notions of pure and impure are relied upon in everyday life to settle social intercourse.

[11] The Mulikī Ain code gives a lot of information on this matter: in the case of adultery with a man from whom water is not accepted, but with whom contact does not require purification by sprinkling of water, the husband can demand fifteen rupees from his wife's lover. In the case of adultery with a man from whom water is not accepted and with whom contact requires purification by sprinkling of water, he can demand ten rupees plus a fine of five rupees from his wife's lover; cf. Macdonald 1970:148.

Marc Gaborieau (1972:98), for his part, notes that "sexual relations with a woman of an impure though not untouchable caste are not permitted; up to 1963, they constituted a state of offence (*rajkhat*) punishable by the tribunal. If the guilty man has taken neither food nor water from the hands of the woman, he had to pay a fine (*dand*) and undergo a penance (*prayascitta*); but if he had taken food or water from her, he was degraded and integrated into her caste."

Relations with Jyāpu *in Neighbouring Villages*

The *jyāpu* of Pyangaon do not have many contacts with the neighboring peasant communities. They do not talk to each other; they do not exchange wives; they do not participate in village festivities; they even pretend not to understand each other.[12] There are no lasting social or religious ties between them. Their only contacts are economic: every year, from December to March, the Pyangaon farmers barter their mustard seeds with the wealthy oil pressers of Theco who, in this village, all belong to the *jyāpu* caste. On this occasion, a few products are exchanged, especially some vegetables not grown in Pyangaon (i.e., *bakula*, *Vicia faba* L.). The Theco and Bulu *jyāpu* never come to Pyangaon except in August, when the theater troupes of these two villages travel around giving performances.[13]

Pyangaon thus appears to be a relatively closed village. How can this situation be explained? All *jyāpu* are theoretically allowed to intermarry. Now, as we have seen, the village of Pyangaon is nearly completely endogamous; according to our estimates, over 75 percent. The peasants of this village do not marry outside the village, even among *jyāpu* in Bulu, Chapagaon, or Theco. This ban is observed by the great majority of the population. The only cases of intervillage marriages that we have heard about have always involved complications, the details of which are related with great pleasure. There was, for instance, the case of the young woman, already married, who ran off with a peasant from Theco and who is living with him today. The girl's parents do not want to deal any more with their daughter and turn away when meeting her in the street. The former husband cannot exert pressure on his rival, a "stranger," to pay the sum of money which would settle the case. We can also mention the story of a young man, an orphan from Theco, who came to live in Pyangaon and married with a widow. Both the couple and the parents of the wife are today in a difficult position.[14]

When these intervillage marriages are discussed, the peasants always stress their unhappy end and the sorrow of the husband and wife. The comments are made in an emphatic tone. But the worst has yet to come: anyone, whether man or woman, who decides to marry outside the community automatically loses his or her status within the village. These persons are expelled from their clan and from their *guṭhi*; they are no

[12] The dialect spoken in Pyangaon is, in fact, quite different from that spoken in Bulu, Chapagaon, or Theco.

[13] These theatrical performances are called *jyāpu pyākhā* or *pyākhā*; their themes are old folktales.

[14] Out of thirteen cases of intervillage marriages studied, eight were remarriages of widow(ers) or divorcees, and two were first marriages. We never found out the story of the three other cases.

longer allowed to take part in the offerings made to the clan divinity, and their relatives will not accept to cremate them after their death.

The *jyāpu* of Pyangaon also refuse to eat any rice cooked (in Newari *jā*) by the *jyāpu* of the neighboring villages. The latter, on the other hand, say that if they eat rice prepared by the villagers of Pyangaon, they will be excommunicated from their clan and *guṭhi.* As mentioned earlier, some young *jyāpu* from Theco or Bulu have nevertheless married girls from Pyangaon. But to retain their status, they have to refrain from eating the rice cooked by their wives. Generally in this case, two fireplaces are built; one for the husband, one for the wife.

The stories which deal with unhappily married couples are often distorted and some of them are complete inventions. They still reveal, however, a certain "state of mind." In fact, no cooked food is shared between the *jyāpu* of Pyangaon and those of the neighboring villages. When the Theco or Bulu peasants come and give theatrical performances in the village street, they are offered *baji* (in Newari), vegetables or potatoes, and corn beer. They are never given cooked rice. The villagers are too afraid of the insult they might suffer if the others refused the rice.

In "hierarchic" terms, the status of the Pyangaon population can be defined as follows: the farmers of the neighboring communities treat them as *jyāpu*, but as lower ranking *jyāpu*. The Pyangaon farmers, for their part, feel that they are higher in rank than the *jyāpu* in the neighboring villages. This kind of situation is quite frequent in the Newar caste system. Excluding the priests and the *ma ju pi,* it can even be considered as the rule in most cases. Each group claims to occupy a position higher than or equal to the caste ranking just above it in the hierarchy. To justify such claims, all arguments are valid: sometimes filiations of royal or divine origin are mentioned, sometimes historical or legendary events, and sometimes great pains are taken to observe the Brahman rules as strictly as possible. One *jyāpu* section will be treated as lower ranking because it eats or its ancestors used to eat boar's meat. Another section will refuse to give away its daughter to other peasants because its members are the servants of an important and prestigious divinity.

It is particularly difficult, in these circumstances, to appreciate objectively and completely the position of two groups involved in a quarrel. There are too many criteria; they only acquire their real meaning if considered from a particular point of view. A different hierarchy is obtained if the situation is observed from the point of view of another caste. The contradictions do not seem to bother the persons concerned. By giving a static picture of the Newar caste system, the fact that these quarrels play an important, if not essential part in this system, is ignored.

With reference to the case of Pyangaon, we note that the arguments put forward by the two parties involved concern first the origin of the village

and second the activities of its inhabitants. These two points refer to the legend of the village's origin, which relates that one day a Malla king from Bhaktapur came to hunt with his court to the south of the Kathmandu Valley, in the Lele area. On reaching the village called Pulan Sankhu, the king met a girl he immediately fell in love with. They had relations together and this was followed by the birth of a little boy. The parents asked their daughter to seek compensation from the king. The daughter decided to do so and went to her lover, who gave his son and his descendants the right to cut bamboo wherever they liked, together with the monopoly for making the bamboo boxes used to measure out grain. A few generations later, the descendants of this child left Pulan Sankhu and settled in the Kathmandu Valley, where they founded a village which they called Pyangaon, in memory of the privilege granted by the king of Bhaktapur. Several years went by. One day, the inhabitants of another village, Makal Kuca, joined the first group. These newly arrived people used to earn their living by making and trading brooms, known in Newari as *tuphi.* When they settled down in Pyangaon, they gave up this occupation and joined the other villagers in making these boxes or *pyāṅg*. (The full text of the legend can be found in Toffin [1977a:35].)

The above summary of the origin of the village was related to us by the *jyāpu* of Pyangaon and of the neighboring villages. This legend is interesting here because it contributes to the explanation of the position of the inhabitants of Pyangaon in relation to the other *jyāpu*. The legend specifies that the Pyangaon peasants did not come from the Kathmandu Valley, but from two villages lying south of the valley, between one and two days' walk away. It is thus very doubtful that the first occupants of the village were really Newar. The farmers of the neighboring communities say that the inhabitants of Pyangaon are "people of the hills," (*pahāṛpi*), who arrived in the valley not long ago and who adopted the Newar language and customs at a later date. If this version were true, the peasants of Pyangaon would stand on the same level as the Tibeto-Burmese ethnic groups such as the Sherpas, Gurungs, or Tamangs, all of them being considered by the *jyāpu* to be *kwo jāt* [low-caste people].

The *jyāpu* of the neighboring communities mention a second argument which is linked to the first. The legend, so they say, specifies that the inhabitants of Pyangaon were originally makers of bamboo boxes and *tuphi* [brooms]. Now, in the south of the valley, they go on to say, bamboo working is also the speciality of another Newar *jāt*,[15] the *pahi* or *pahari*.[16]

[15] *Jāt* "sort, kind; tribe, nation; caste" (Turner 1931:213).

[16] *Pahari* (*pahee-pakree-pihi*): "they consider themselves to be the original *jyāpu*. They make baskets, brooms, etc., also bring bamboo and reeds from the jungle. They worship Buddha and Siva" (Chattopadhyay 1923:543). Oldfield (1880: vol. 1:187) describes the *pahari* as "makers of wickerwork baskets, dhokahs, karmus and wicker chattahs (umbrellas) such as the poor use in the rain when working in the fields." For recent points of view on the *pahari*, see Bista (1966: 1–3) and Toffin (1977b: 295–307).

This caste, which speaks a rather special Newari dialect, lives in villages not far from Pyangaon, in the Pulan Sankhu and Makal Kuca area, where the Pyangaon peasants are supposed to have come from. According to the *jyāpu* of the valley, the *pahi* are a lower *jāt*, occupying the same rank as the Tamang. Cooked rice is not accepted[17] from their hands and there is no intermarriage with them. Most of the Newar peasants of the Lalitpur district assimilate the inhabitants of Pyangaon to the *pahari*, by stressing the similarities between the two groups. Therefore, they relegate them to a lower level in the caste system.

What do the Pyangaon inhabitants reply to these arguments? They willingly acknowledge that they come from the hills but they add: "through our most distant ancestors, we descend from the royal family of the Mallas. How could we, in these circumstances, accept rice cooked by the *jyāpu*? How could we marry them?" It should be noted that the bans on marriages and cooked food between Pyangaon and the neighboring communities are applicable either way. According to which point of view one takes, one therefore obtains a hierarchy that is not only different but also contradictory.

"As for the *pahi* or the Tamangs," say the Pyangaon peasants, "we do not get married with them, we do not accept cooked rice from them, we have no affinity or relationship with them, except at the time of Indra jātrā, the great festival of the village, when the *pahi* come to the village in great numbers." It should be noted, however, that the *jyāpu* of Pyangaon buy a number of basketwork objects from the *pahi,* in particular the portable shelters carried on the back in the paddy fields, instead of an umbrella.[18] We do not intend to discuss here the value of any specific interpretation of the origin of Pyangaon's inhabitants. We only wanted to relate the manner in which a legend could be exploited for hierarchic purposes, and which arguments were put forward in ordinary conversation to claim a higher rank than another caste.

Relations with the Higher Castes[19]

THE PRIESTS. The village's Hindu majority calls on the help of a *barmu* (in Nepali, *bāhun*) Hindu priest, and the Buddhist minority on the services of a *gubhāju* Buddhist priest. The former lives in Tahakel, a village only a few minutes' walk away from Pyangaon, and the latter in Patan, the valley's second largest town. The *barmu* and *gubhāju* priests hold the

[17] Oldfield (1880:187) classes the *pahari* on a lower level than the *jyāpu*. For Nepali (1965:150), the *pahari* are a section of the *jyāpu*; they can intermarry freely with them.

[18] In Pyangaon, this "umbrella" is actually called *pahi kusā*, literally "the *pahi* umbrella."

[19] We are only dealing here with two higher castes: the priests and merchants. We should however point out that the *jyāpu* of Pyangaon also have important ritual links with a number of Indo-Nepalese masons of Chetri caste; in this connection, see Toffin (1977:150–151).

highest place in the Newar caste hierarchy. When they enter the *jyāpu*'s house, they are given the place of honor on the second floor, in the front part of the room (façade side). The villagers bow down before them. When they make offerings, the villagers stand slightly behind them and play the part of a servant. Through their knowledge of the complex rituals which do not mean much to the peasants, the priests impose respect and deference. The *barmu* and the *gubhāju* do not accept rice cooked by the *jyāpu*; when they are fed, it is always with rice flakes.

The Hindu and Buddhist priests mainly come to Pyangaon for the *śrāddha* (in Newari *pyoṁ tayegu*),[20] a funeral ceremony which is held six days after the full moon of August.[21] The *thakāli* or his wife conducts all the other religious ceremonies accompanying the rites of passage (birth, initiation, marriage). The cult of the divinity Nikuncā Mahādev, the *āgā dyo* of Pyangaon, is conducted by five *ācāju*, living in the community itself.[22] These *ācāju* do not have a higher rank than the other members of the village; they belong to the same caste.[23] They only differ in their knowledge of a few *mantra* [magic formulas] and *mudra* [symbolic gestures] which are essential for the conducting of religious ceremonies. It must be pointed out, however, that to celebrate the foundation rites of the *caitya* (a small stūpa-shaped building), the services of a *gubhāju* are called for. Similarly, a *barmu* priest is asked to purify the temple of the *āgā dio* if it is defiled. We noted finally that in October, November, and December of 1971, a Patan *barmu* priest came to read excerpts from the Rāmāyana in Newari twice a week. The reading used to take place at about 5 or 6 P.M. in the village street. A *guṭhi*, the *barmu guṭhi*, would give the priest and his assistant a few *pāthī* of paddy rice and wheat.[24]

The priest (*guruju*) and his client (*jajmān*) are linked by an indissoluble bond. The *jajmān* must always call upon the same priest, and in case of death must choose his successor from the family of his *guruju*. For a *jajmān*, the obligation to call on the services of a particular priest is transmitted from father to son.

When the Hindu priest comes to celebrate the *śrāddha* rites, he gets nine *mānā* of husked rice and six rupees. The *barmu* can also ask his *jajmān* to hoe his fields twice a year. This task is performed within a *guṭhi*. To celebrate the *śrāddha* rites, the *gubhāju* is given seven to ten *mānā* of husked rice, two to three *mānā* of rice flakes, and a few rupees.

[20] *Srāddha*: "A ceremony performed in honour of and for the benefit of deceased ancestors, consisting of the daily offering of water and, at stated intervals, of balls of rice and meal (piṇḍa) to three paternal and maternal forefathers" (Turner 1931:575).

[21] According to Nepali (1965:141), the upper Hindu Newar castes accomplish the *śrāddha* thirteen days after the funeral, and the *bare* goldsmiths seven days after the funeral.

[22] These five *ācāju* are only recruited among the four Hindu patriclans of the village. The Buddhist minority is kept aside from this cult.

[23] It should be noted that in Kathmandu, the word *ācāju* denotes a subcaste of the *shreṣṭha* (Nepali 1965:157).

[24] One *muri* = 20 *pāthi* = 8 *mānā*; one *mānā* = 570 cm³ or 10 *muṭhi* [handful].

THE MERCHANTS. Newar merchants are called *shreṣṭha* or else *sheśio*. They account for 21.4 percent of the Newar population (Rosser 1966:86). They are a dynamic and enterprising group, controlling most of the trade in the Kathmandu Valley and occupying good positions in the administration. The *jyāpu* of Pyangaon do a lot of trade with the Newar merchants of Chapagaon. They buy in their shops manufactured goods from China, India, or Nepal (such as scissors, mirrors, soap, matches, cigarettes, batteries, etc.). They also sell to them every morning and evening the milk of the buffalo heifers and sell through them part of the wheat harvest.

In the caste hierarchy, the *shreṣṭha* rank slightly higher than the *jyāpu*. To mark this superior relationship in "Hindu" terms, the *shreṣṭha* do not accept rice cooked by the *jyāpu*, whereas the latter have to accept rice cooked by the former. The *shreṣṭha* are supposed to be "purer" than the farmers, because they celebrate more purification rites, and because events such as births and deaths defile them for longer periods than the *jyāpu*. For instance, whereas the peasants observe impurity for nine days after a funeral, the merchants will remain impure for twelve days.

In this specific case, the relationships between *jyāpu* and *shreṣṭha* also involve an opposition between literate and illiterate groups and between townspeople and peasants. Whereas the Chapagaon *shreṣṭha* can all read and write, the Pyangaon *jyāpu* are still nearly all illiterate. For the farmers, the *shreṣṭha* merchants are "persons who know" (*sa pi*), whereas they "do not know" (*ma sa pi*). The two groups are opposed in all aspects of clothing and eating customs. Even the languages are somewhat different. The *shreṣṭha* are thoroughly townspeople. Their political, administrative, and economic success originates in towns and trading. They look down on farming and farmers, and to them, the village of Pyangaon is the ultimate in barbarity because all its inhabitants are farmers. They are nicknamed "monkeys" after their expeditions into the Terai jungle to seek the type of bamboo needed to make the *pyāṅg* boxes (see Toffin 1977:170–173).

Relations with the Lower Castes

Five lower castes have important economic and ritual links with the inhabitants of Pyangaon: two from which water is accepted, the barbers and the *jugi* musicians; and three from which water is not accepted: the butchers, the *dom̀* musicians, and the blacksmiths (belonging to the Nepalese *kāmī* caste).

THE BARBER. About 200 meters northwest of the village there is a small one-story house with a thatched roof. This is the home of the Newar barber, *nau,* who lives there with his wife and two children. The barber's

clients include not only all the inhabitants of Pyangaon but also thirteen families in a nearby village, Bulu.

What are the *nau*'s dealings with the villagers of Pyangaon? It should first be pointed out that as his home is so close to the village, the barber is very much involved in its life: the inhabitants of Pyangaon come to visit him and spend a lot of time chatting with him on his doorstep. The barber frequently goes to his clients' houses to settle a matter, to discuss the date and time of a specific purification ceremony, or to claim a sum of money or a certain quantity of grain in exchange for his services. His son and daughter go to the village school and play freely with the young Pyangaon *jyāpu*. The community's *thakāli,* however, refuse to consider the barber as a full member of the village. The *nau* does not participate in the public and administrative life of Pyangaon and is not given any part in the decisions about the community. In this one-caste village, the barber is treated as a stranger. His origin is not the same as that of the other inhabitants; he does not speak the same dialect; he does not work in the fields; his wife does not wear the red-edged black *jyāpu* sari. In fact, he does not have much in common with the Pyangaon *jyāpu*.

Daily relations with the barber are settled by caste bans. Rice he has cooked himself is not accepted. This criterion, as stated above, is sufficient to mark a person's lower position. The barber's son, in addition, will not be allowed to marry a *jyāpuni,* and similarly a village *jyāpu* will not be able to marry the barber's daughter. If the barber is with a group of villagers and they are smoking a hookah together, the *jyāpu* will only offer the barber the bowl of the pipe, without the other parts. The rules about access to the house are more flexible: normally, the *nau* is only allowed to go up to the first floor, but nearly all the villagers let him go up to the second floor. It should be noted, finally, that the barber is not a *ma ju pi*: water can be accepted from him.

The *nau* has an important function from the religious viewpoint. His services or those of his wife, are called on for all the ceremonies marking the passage rites (birth, initiation, marriage, funeral). By shaving the head of his clients, by cutting their nails, he removes the impurities which had attached themselves to their person on these occasions. He is mainly a purifier. At a birth, he has to shave the head of the newborn baby's father. At the *keiṭā pūjā,* the male initiation rite, he has to shave the head of the initiate, leaving a tuft of hair at the top of the skull. This is the first time that the child or the adolescent has his head shaved by the barber; previously, his mother just cut his hair with a pair of scissors. Through this initiation, the barber gets a new client. At the rite of female confinement, *bārhā tayegu,* the barber's wife has to paint the feet of the young woman and of her mother with red dye. This ceremony takes place on the twelfth day of the *bārhā tayegu,* when the confined girl comes out of her house and "looks at the sun" after eleven days of confinement. At a

marriage, the barber shaves the bridegroom's head and his wife does the bride's nails and paints her feet with red dye. Finally, at the purification ceremony (in Newari, *ghasu*) which takes place nine days after the funeral, the *nau* shaves the heads of the dead man's children. The same operation sometimes occurs at the rituals celebrated forty-five days and six months after the funeral.

How is the barber paid? The *nau* has no field, just a little garden in front of his house where he grows a few vegetables and some spices. He is entirely dependent on his clients for his food and survival. The peasants provide for his needs as follows: each household is required to give the *nau* a certain quantity of grain three times a year, at the wheat, corn, and irrigated rice harvests. This payment is called *bāli,* a Nepali word meaning "crop, harvest." It varies according to the client's financial and economic possibilities: the poorer families, who till a small area of land and have to feed a large family, only give three to five *mānā* of grain at each of the three harvests; the wealthier persons give up to one *pāthī* (eight *mānā*) of grain, that is, about three *pāthī* a year.

At each of the passage rites, a number of additional payments are given. Thus, at a birth, the barber receives three to six *mānā* of rice flakes and one *pāthī* of husked rice. He is also given one share of the banquet, which must include two *mānā* of rice flakes, one *tarkāri*[25] of meat and vegetables, and one or two cups of corn beer. At the *keiṭā pūjā,* the barber is not entitled to a payment in grain; nor is he invited to the banquet. He just receives, as at a birth, a share of the banquet. At the *bārhā tayegu*, the *jyāpu* family has to give eighty-eight *paisā* to the barber's family. In addition, if the family is wealthy, it gives seasonal vegetables and spices. At a funeral, as the peasants admit, "we give the barber what we give him at a birth," that is to say, three to six *mānā* of rice flakes, one *pāthī* of husked rice, and a share of the banquet.

As can be seen, services are paid for in kind only. We should note, however, that clients, except those who have used the *nau*'s services during the year for a birth or funeral, are required to give the barber eighty-eight *paisā* a year. Finally, any person who has his hair cut or his head shaved and who is not a regular client, has to pay the barber one rupee.

THE BUTCHER. The butcher, *nāy*, comes to the village for feasts and ceremonies. The *jyāpu* of Pyangaon always call on the services of the same butcher family which lives in Chapagaon.

The butcher is a *ma ju ma* [a person from whom water cannot be accepted]. When he comes to Pyangaon and is offered a meal, he is received in a small room on the first floor of the house. He may not go up

[25] Turner gives "vegetables" (1931:274). But *tarkāri* can also denote a fish, meat, or vegetable dish intended to accompany the rice.

higher. He is not invited to smoke a hookah. The butcher is not allowed to walk on the lawn where the *digu dyo* [clan divinity] of the village is. To mark this caste's low position in the Newar caste hierarchy, the *jyāpu* say that the butchers breed pigs. Pigs are very unclean animals whose flesh will never be eaten by a peasant; they also say that the butchers are not allowed to roof their houses with tiles, whereas the *jyāpu* are not affected by this ban.[26]

The Pyangaon peasants rarely buy meat outside the village. The butchers have a role that is more ritual than economic: when a child is born, the butcher's wife has to cut the newborn baby's umbilical cord and throw it away at the northwest entrance of the village, at the place known in Newari as *chwāsa*.[27] Furthermore, the butcher's wife is required to pierce, in the days following the birth, the lobe of the ears of the little girls and the helix of the ears of the little boys whose elder brothers and sisters died when they were babies. This operation, to make it possible to wear earrings, is performed with a needle. A thread is inserted in the hole, to prevent the flesh from closing in. At the male initiation rite (*keiṭā pūjā*), the butcher spends the whole day in Pyangaon. After tying up the animal or animals to be sacrificed with the help of his sons, he cuts the animal's throat and sprinkles the altar and the initiate's nearest relatives with its blood. He then marks the forehead of the initiated child's father with vermilion. The butcher and his wife also have to cut up the carcass of the animal and roast it on a straw fire.

Whenever a feast involves the killing of a buffalo, the *jyāpu* call on the butcher's services. It is considered impure to slaughter a buffalo and only the *ma ju pi* can do this. It should be noted that the *jyāpu* of Pyangaon do not ask the butchers to provide music for funerals, which often happens among the Newars (Nepali 1965:185). In Chapagaon, only the *shreṣṭha* and the higher castes require the butchers to do this.

The *nāy* is not entitled to an annual *bāli* like the barber. He is just given some food and a few coins whenever he comes to Pyangaon. It is also customary to give him a share of meat amounting to a *casari*[28] when he sacrifices a buffalo. When his wife comes to cut the newborn baby's umbilical cord, she is given eighty-eight *paisā* and one to three *mānā* of husked rice. Finally, at the *keiṭā pūjā,* the butcher's family receives a share of the banquet: beer, rice flakes, pieces of roast meat.

THE MUSICIANS. Musicians are called *kusle* (or *jugi*), and *doṁ*. The Pyangaon peasants use two musicians for the whole village. One lives in

[26] Sylvain Lévi relates that in the reign of Jaya Sthiti Malla (fourteenth century), the *kulū*, *kasāi*, and the *poḍe* were forbidden to roof their houses with tiles (1905:237).

[27] The *chwāsa* is a particularly dangerous place in the village; clothes soiled by menstruation, sheets and clothes having belonged to the dead, and foodstuffs offered to the evil spirits are thrown there.

[28] *Casari* is a measurement of weight used with a "steelyard" (800 grams?).

Patan: he plays the *ḍholak* or *ḍhwolak*) [drum].[29] The other lives in Chapagaon and plays the *mohali* [oboe].[30] The drummer is called *doṁ* (from *ḍhwolak*?), and the oboeist, *jugi*. The word *kusle* is used only for the last musician. The *doṁ* is said to rank slightly lower than the *jugi* in the Newar caste hierarchy. Drummers and oboe players do not intermarry. They do not accept rice cooked by each other.[31]

These two musicians are *ma ju pi,* "persons from whom water is not accepted." The peasants never share the same hookah with them. Like the butchers, the musicians breed pigs, and are not allowed to roof their houses with tiles; they can only use thatch. They differ from the *nāy* in one way, however: access to the inside of the house. As seen above, whereas the butcher is allowed to enter the house, the musicians are not. The village elders add that purification is necessary after touching a *kusle*. In fact, in everyday life nobody really bothers about being touched by a musician. The villagers just keep some water-filled jars at a respectable distance (for instance, at a ceremonial banquet in the open air).

The *doṁ* and *jugi* mainly come to Pyangaon for religious festivals and *guṭhi* ceremonies. It would be boring to mention all of them. Some of the main ones are: Indra jātrā, dasaī, gathā muga, phāgu punhi, the month of guṁlā, etc. At the end of the monsoon (August–September), a period during which the year's biggest local festival is held, they stay in the village nearly all the time. At this festival, the two musicians stand slightly aside from the *jyāpu*, on a stage, underneath a shelter, or in the street. At the ceremonial banquets which are held in the open air, they eat at a respectable distance from the guests. They are served last.

The drummer and oboe player are entitled to an annual *bāli.* But it is much lower than the barber's: they receive only four to six *mānā* of grain per house. Certain persons pay in cash: two to five rupees, depending on what they can afford. For the largest festivals, Indra jātrā and guṁlā in particular, special *guṭhi* pay the musicians: four to five *pāthi.* At the byāṁcā nakegu, a festival in honor of the frogs which is held at the full moon in the month of Srāvan (July–August), the *doṁ* and the *jugi* go round the village asking for one or two *mānā* of rice flakes and soya beans at each house. It should be noted, finally, that when they come to Pyangaon to play, the musicians are always given a meal or a share in the banquet.[32]

[29] *ḍholak*: "a barrel-shaped drum (. . .) struck with the open hand on both heads" (Hoerburger 1971:11).

[30] *Mohali*: "an oboe with a curved tube and metal bell. It is played by members of the *kusle* caste only" (Hoerburger 1971:10).

[31] The *doṁ* (honorific name: Bādikār) are not cited in the Mulikī Ain. Yet, they represent a distinct caste of nearly thirty-five households in the valley, associated with important temples, and Hindu or Buddhist deities (e.g. Bajra Bārāhī, Bajra Yogini, Surya Bināyah).

[32] In this connection, see also Bista (1971:37–41), who gives a summary of the nature and the amount of the retributions to the craftsman castes in a Chetri community (Kathmandu Valley).

The *jugi* musician who comes to Pyangaon does not work as tailor in this community, as is usual in other villages. In fact, he does not even carry on that trade in Patan and Chapagaon. Whenever they need to have clothes cut and sewn, the *jyāpu* of Pyangaon call on the services of Nepali tailors, *damāi,* from Takhel. These work under the shelters (*phalcā*), sitting "in tailor fashion" in front of their sewing machine. They are usually hired during the week before the festival of Indra jātrā (September) to renew the villagers' clothes before the festivities. The day's work starts at about 9:30 or 10 A.M. and ends at about 5 P.M. The tailors are paid in cash: five rupees a day. They are also given a small meal at about 2 P.M. and this consists of fried soya beans, vegetables, and rice flakes.

THE BLACKSMITH. The *jyāpu* of Pyangaon have their tools and farming implements forged by a blacksmith of Indo-Nepalese caste, *kāmī,* who lives about fifteen minutes' walk from the village, to the southeast. Although the *kāmī* is not a Newar, we will deal with him here because of his importance in the village economy. It is curious to note that the villagers of Pyangaon prefer to go to a *kāmī,* rather than to a Newar blacksmith, *kau*, in Chapagaon. To explain this oddity, the men say that the *kau* are too expensive and that they already have too many clients.

Whereas the Newar blacksmith is a *ju ma* [a person from whom water can be accepted] the *kāmī* blacksmith is a *ma ju ma* [a person from whom water cannot be accepted]. According to the Mulukī Ain Code, touching him requires purification by sprinkling of water (Macdonald 1970:146). Generally speaking, the *jyāpu* of Pyangaon place the *kāmī* on the same level as the musicians: like them, he cannot enter the house. The villagers also have to avoid his touching a brass jar full of water; if he does, the jar has to be purified with water and ashes.

The *kāmī* works for the whole village. He has just a few clients elsewhere. His functions are purely economic and he does not perform any ritual services. He only forges and repairs agricultural implements (hoe, sickle, etc.), knife and machete blades, punches, choppers, etc., as required by his client.

In exchange for these services, each household, depending on what it can afford, gives a *bāli.* The wealthier families give four to five *pāthi* of paddy rice and two *pāthi* of wheat, and the poorer ones only give three *pāthi* of paddy rice and one *pāthi* of wheat. It should be noted that those families farming a large amount of land often employ the *kāmī* as a farm employee at the times of heavy agricultural labor, such as the paddy rice and wheat harvests or the paddy rice threshing. The worker is given five rupees a day; sometimes six, if the day's work is long (these are 1971 figures). He is also given corn beer throughout the day and a small meal at about 2 P.M.

CONCLUSION: SECTION OR SUBCASTE?

Pyangaon is a one-caste village. It nearly forms a total unit of endogamy and commensality. Only the inhabitants of the community may smoke a hookah composed of all its elements, only they are allowed to enter into the kitchen. When it comes into contact with the other Newar castes or the neighboring villages, Pyangaon acts as a subcaste. Is this a unique case among the *jyāpu*? Can one speak of subcastes among the Newar farmers of the Kathmandu Valley?

Several authors have shown the existence, among the *jyāpu*, of internal divisions: Hodgson, early in the nineteenth century (Chattopadhyay 1923:537–539), Locke quite recently (1973:25–26), have shown how the cult of the divinity Rāto Matsyendranāth was celebrated by a number of *jyāpu* groups, each having to perform a special ritual service. Thus, the *bārāī* [*jyāpu* carpenters] supply the wood necessary for the construction of Matsyendranāth's chariot and must also look after the carpentry work involved for this chariot. The *yaṁvā* have to build with ropes, leaves, and bamboo shoots the structure which projects about 20 meters over the wheels of the chariot. The *gakhū* [brakesmen] are responsible for stopping the chariot wheels if they are going to crush someone or to meet with an obstacle. The *jaṁgal tāne* must pull on the chariot's ropes. And finally, the *suwā* prepare the meals offered to Matsyendranāth (Chattopadhyay 1923:539).

There are also divisions based on a special occupation. Apart from the inhabitants of Pyangaon and their bamboo boxes, we can mention the *kāhabhujā* who play the *kāhā*, a musical instrument, at funerals (Chattopadhyay 1923:538); the *mu* who come to sell the *musvā̄* flower at the markets (Chattopadhyay 1923:538);[33] the *kumā* who make pottery (some of them making black pottery and others red pottery); the *dhangu* who are cornfield surveyors; and also masons, etc. (Oldfield 1880:vol. 1:184).

What are these divisions? Sections or subcastes? In Hodgson's opinion they are not subcastes because, he says, all these groups may intermarry freely.[34] This assertion, which is perhaps accurate for those groups

[33] The following forms are found here: *mu, mulmi, musa, moot, mow.*

[34] Chattopadhyay (1923:537), quoting the *Unpublished Papers by B. H. Hodgson* (London Indian Office Library), states that the *jyāpu* are divided into three groups: the "bheendhungo" [we have kept to the author's transcription], who are descendants of the Vaisya; the "dhungo," descendants of the *Bāñra* (*bare* or *bāñda*); and the "dungoo," descendants of the *shreṣṭha.* These groups are said to be divided again into sixteen subsections: "gokoo, kumhal, koenaso, mulmi (or mut), kahabhodja, duli, yungwar, ghukoo, gout, booshee (or pamee), soa, dungoo, koomalh, mooshaka, cheo, awal, jewonalee" (1923:537–539).

Oldfield, for his part, names six "classes" of *jyāpu*: the "mus, dungols, guas (guals or hales), and the pihis (or pahees)." According to Nepali (1965:167), a distinction should also be made between the Hindu *jyāpu* ("sat sudra") and the Buddhist *jyāpu* ("asat sudra or swa"). All these sections can intermarry.

attached to the cult of Matsyendranāth, does not seem to be true for all cases. Thus, in Thimi and Kathmandu, the status of the *kumā* is the same as that of the other *jyāpu* (and consequently they are allowed to marry them), whereas in Bhadgaon the rules of endogamy and commensality are strictly observed between these two groups (Rosser 1966:87). Similarly, the *swā* or *suwā* (Hindu *jyāpu* from Bhadgaon) do not intermarry with the Kathmandu *jyāpu*, whereas they are allowed to intermarry with the Thimi *jyāpu* (Nepali 1965:167).[35] The *jyāpu* of the Kirtipur District, on the other hand, refuse to marry and share cooked rice with the *kumā* who make black pottery (Nepali 1965:168). Finally, there is neither commensality nor intermarriage between the *jyāpu* and the *pahi*, considered by Nepali to be a section of the former.

Pyangaon is therefore not a unique case in the Kathmandu Valley. The divisions among the *jyāpu* act like subcastes and should be called by this name. The Newar peasants have been integrated for a long time into a society where Hinduism is triumphant and where the Brahman religious and economic power plays a predominant role. Social life is dominated by caste ideology. Everything is expressed in Brahman terms of pure and impure. In this context, forces are urging these groups, on the level of the caste, to break up, to oppose each other, and to form subcastes. The peasants are unable to find a language other than the caste language to describe their social intercourse. All the subcastes of the *jyāpu* are called *jāt* (or *jāti*), the same word being used to designate the whole caste of the peasants.

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The Role of the Priest in Newar Society

STEPHEN MICHAEL GREENWOLD

Nepal, the only Hindu kingdom in the world, is nonetheless a nation in which numerous Buddhist communities coexist in tranquility with their Hindu neighbors. The Newars, the numerically dominant ethnic community of the Kathmandu Valley and a people justly famed for their remarkable artistic achievements in sculpture, painting, and architecture, offer a microcosm of this peaceful coexistence, for internally they are composed of Hindu and Buddhist sections. The existence of these two separate yet interrelated religious traditions is of extreme interest because it is one of the few remaining examples of the situation found in India from the inception of Buddhism through its demise.[1]

In recent years there has been much speculation based upon textual analysis concerning the nature of the dialectics between Hinduism and Buddhism. Nepal, particularly the Kathmandu Valley, is an area in which a study of the dynamics of the interactions of Hinduism and Buddhism may be made. Moreover, an examination of Newar religious organization permits investigation of how an actual Buddhist community has come to terms with the Hindu caste structure. Once again, this is a subject on which there has been a great deal of speculation. Although passages

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[1] In recent years a revival of Buddhist institutions has occurred in India. This movement gained great impetus through the example of Dr. Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar's public conversion to Buddhism shortly before his death, though today not all Buddhists in India come from a Harijan background.

attacking the Brahman view of how society should be organized can be found in various Buddhist texts little is known about how, in fact, Buddhists related to their Hindu neighbors. Lastly, the Newars, who have replaced the usual Buddhist monastic structure with a married clergy, offer an opportunity to examine the precise nature of the relationship between Buddhism and asceticism. The Newar example thus may permit one to speculate upon the connection between the decline and eventual demise of a flourishing monastic structure and the disappearance of Indian Buddhism.

THE SOCIAL SETTING

The majority of the Newars live in the Kathmandu Valley, although there are some Newars in villages and towns throughout Nepal as well as in India (particularly Darjeeling), Sikkim, and Bhutan. The center of the Newar world, then, is a small, oval-shaped valley covering only some 218 square miles. It is a valley of extraordinary physical beauty, ringed by a series of mountains, which rise rather steeply on all sides and are dominated along the northern rim by the lofty, white-capped Himalayas.

At one time the Newars alone formed the basis of the valley's population. However, with the integration of the Newar kingdoms into the larger entity of Nepal, an event precipitated by the conquest of the three Newar kingdoms of the valley by the Gorkha king Prithivi Narayana Shaha in A.D. 1768–1769, a large immigration of non-Newar peoples from the neighboring hill regions occurred. Today, the valley, while retaining a large Newar population, possesses an ever-increasing mixture of peoples: Brahmans, Chetris, Tamangs, Gurungs, Tibetans, Magars, etc. In 1970 the population of the valley was 540,000, of whom approximately 52 percent were Newari speakers.

Internally the Newar social structure is characterized by what can be called castes: that is, local, kinship-delimited, preferentially endogamous, commensally restricted groups arranged in a hierarchy. These groups sometimes are occupationally specialized social units, though in many instances this occupation may not be a strict monopoly and thus will be shared by other castes. Moreover, in some cases a caste may merely reserve an occupation for its members rather than impose one upon them. And in some cases the caste may not be identified or associated with any particular occupation at all.

The exact number of Newar castes is a matter of some ambiguity and no two lists compiled by separate authors ever seem to be identical. In Table 1 I have listed what I consider to be the major Newar castes found in the capital city of Kathmandu. This list is by no means complete, as it deliberately omits certain small castes consisting of only a few families

within the city. The castes are listed according to their rank in the ritual hierarchy.

The great divide within this ritual hierarchy is between those castes that are eligible for the performance of domestic rites by a Brahman or Vajracharya *purohita* [household priest], the latter being a hereditary Buddhist priest, and those castes that are denied such ritual services. All castes of the first category are considered to be of clean caste status; all those of the second category are of unclean status. Within the category of clean castes there is the secondary division into those for whom the body purification ritual of cutting the toenails, painting the tips of a woman's toes red, and shaving a man's head are performed by the clean caste of Nau (barbers) and those for whom these purificatory rites are done by the unclean caste of Nä (butchers, meat sellers, and barbers). All castes served by the Nau are of higher ritual status than those served by the Nä.

Several interesting facts emerge from an examination of the figures of the number of households per caste in Kathmandu. Of all Newar house-

Table 1. Major Newar castes in the city of Kathmandu

Caste	Traditional occupation	Total number of households	Percent of total
DIVISION I. Castes whose *purohita* is Brahman or Vajracharya			
I–A. *Castes whose body purification rite is performed by the Nau*			
Deo Brahman	*Purohita* for all Hindu Newars	39	.31
Vajracharya	*Purohita* for all Buddhist Newars	439	3.53
Jha Brahman	Temple priests	22	.18
Bare	Temple priests with right of membership in Newar Buddhist *vihara* [monasteries]. Also traditionally gold- and silversmiths	641	5.16
Sheshyo	No actual traditional occupation, although many are merchants as well as officials in the government bureaucracy	3,666	29.47
Urhä	Merchants and artisans	1,098	8.83
Jyapu	Farmers	2,973	23.90
Saimi	Owners and workers in mills in which mustard seed is pressed into oil	737	5.93
Khusa	Palanquin bearers and agricultural workers	210	1.76
Pun	Painters of religious pictures	94	.76
Chippa	Dyers of cloth	220	1.77
Gathu	Gardeners and cultivators	78	.63
Nau	Barbers	73	.59
Kau	Blacksmiths	101	.81
All other castes of clean status		825	6.63

Table 1.(*continued*)

Caste	Traditional occupation	Total number of households	Percent of total
DIVISION II. Castes whose *purohita* is not Brahman or Vajracharya			
Nä	Butchers, sellers of meat, and barbers	779	6.26
Jogi	Musicians and tailors	144	1.16
Kulu	Leather workers	2	.01
Chyami	Sweepers	76	.61
Pore	Fishermen, sweepers, and (formerly) public executioners	212	1.70
Total number of Newar households		12,438	100.00

holds in the capital city 90.26 percent are of clean status and 9.74 percent of unclean status. Of the clean caste households 71.38 percent are served by the Nau and 18.88 percent by the Nä. Thus, not only is the vast majority of all Newar households in the city of Kathmandu of clean status, but also these households rank within the highest category of ritual status: those whose *purohita* is a Brahman or Vajracharya and whose rituals of bodily purification are performed by the Nau.

CASTE AND HINDUISM

One of the major disputes among social scientists has been over the definition of the role of ritual symbols within a caste system. There are those who envisage caste as merely an example of a particularly rigid form of social stratification and thus not unlike other societal patterns. On the other hand, there are scholars who view caste as a special sort of social organization specifically related to Indian Hindu culture and hence distinguishable from all other forms of social stratification, so that one can only talk of caste within the South Asian context.

In his discussion of caste among the Newars, Colin Rosser adheres to the general comparative view of caste:

> For my own part, I take "caste" simply to be *a form of social stratification in which the necessary statements and judgements about relative status are couched predominantly in a traditional ritual language*. In a particular caste system the differing status positions of the component groups are in my view derived ultimately and basically, *as in all systems of hierarchical stratification, from the distribution of political and economic power within that system*. . . . The superior position of the Brahman, depending mainly on the power and patronage of the ruler where it has not depended directly on his own political and economic power, has been made secure to the extent to which he has been able to disseminate these mystical theories [of ritual purity and impurity] (Rosser 1966:69, emphasis added).

Louis Dumont, in contradistinction to Rosser, adheres to the view that the basis of caste is the polar opposition of purity and impurity. Moreover, Dumont states that the Newars are not characterized by what he considers a caste structure but rather by mere status groups, some of which are endogamous and others exogamous. For Dumont the internal Newar subdivisions are not really castes or subcastes but a "conglomerate of groups distinguished by their profession, social status (and, among the Newars, even religion). Clearly these conglomerates are not castes, although they may appear as such in certain situations in relation to real outside castes, e.g., Brahmans or Kshatriyas" (Dumont 1964:98).

As I shall demonstrate, the Newars in fact possess a caste structure that conforms most stringently to Dumont's definition. As Dumont has demonstrated, the basis for the polarity of the pure and the impure is the differentiation of status and power. The Brahman is the embodiment of ritual status and his purity is separate from and superior to the Kshatriya's embodiment of political power. Of paramount importance is the relationship between Brahman and Kshatriya. This view is, in fact, not too different from Rosser's statement concerning caste as a system of stratification in which "the necessary statements and judgements" about status are expressed in traditional ritual language (Rosser 1966:69). But rather than follow his own insight, Rosser merely states that the position of the Brahman depends wholly upon either the support and patronage of the secular head of the political apparatus or the Brahman's own control of this apparatus. Thus Rosser admits the necessity of a ritual language according to which status and power are said to be separate and distinct, with the Brahman's purity taking precedence over the ruler's power at the symbolic level of ideological rationalization. Yet he refuses to posit any autonomy to such a symbolic structure and thus states that the priest's actual status is completely subordinate to and derived from considerations of political and economic power.

Max Weber has seen more clearly than any other scholar that because social rank is expressed through a ritual language, the basis of which is the social distance of a particular group from the purity of the Brahman, the Brahman then is an essential and necessary element. But if the Brahman is essential to a caste system, the question then arises: Is it possible to talk of caste in societies lacking Brahman priests? I think that the answer to this question is "yes," given the existence of a priesthood that fully replicates the structural position of the Brahman.

The role of a priesthood is distinctly described by Weber:

> There are also castes among the Mohammedans of India, taken over from the Hindus. And castes are also found among the Buddhists. Even the Indian Christians have not quite been able to withhold themselves from practical recognition of the castes. These non-Hindu castes have lacked . . . the determination of the social rank of castes by the social distance from other Hindu castes, and therewith,

ultimately, from the Brahman. This is decisive for the connection between Hindu castes and Brahmans however intensely a Hindu caste may reject him as priest, as a doctrinal and ritual authority, and in every other respect, the objective situation remains inescapable; in the last analysis, a rank position is determined by the nature of its positive or negative relation to the Brahman. (Weber 1958:29–30).

Weber states that Mohammedan, Buddhist, and Christian castes exist, but in a diminished or modified form. Having defined caste as a Hindu institution, Weber is, of course, ambiguous in his use of the term when he applies it to Mohammedan or Christian social structures. He admits as much himself when he states: "Properly understood, the so-called Islamic castes are essentially status groups and not castes" (1958:132). Although for Weber caste does not exist among Mohammedan populations, it is said to exist among the Buddhist Newars, because in Nepal Buddhism "underwent the typical prebendalizing process in the course of which it was penetrated by tantristic magic and its blood sacrifices" and "was in the Mahayanist North Indian fashion amalgamated with the Hindu caste system" (1958:282).

It is not too surprising that Buddhist monasteries in Nepal should hold considerable amounts of property and that this wealth should be granted to specific priests as stipends, or prebends — a pattern that also occurred within Newari Hinduism, where Brahmans were granted prebends as remuneration for their serving as temple priests; that Buddhism in Nepal should be penetrated by tantra, a process that occurred simultaneously within the Newar Hindu tradition; and that Newar Buddhism should come to incorporate a caste structure. Indeed, from its very beginnings Buddhism has developed out of a dialectical interaction with Hinduism. As La Vallée Poussin states:

Buddhism is not wholly original; it appears, during centuries, as a "buddhification" of institutions, ideas, or feelings, which were simply Indian: the asceticism and the clerical institutions took a special character in Buddhism; the Buddha doctrine of transmigration, of the action and the reward of actions, was a recast of the parallel Hindu doctrines; the cult or worship of Buddhism evolved according to the general transformation of cult and worship; the belief in a God Saviour, prominent in later Buddhism and less developed in early time, reflects also the gradual growth of devotion (*bhakti*). In short, Buddhism is only the "buddhized" aspect of contemporaneous Hinduism (La Vallée Poussin 1937:162).

Certainly the Buddhism of the Newars is and for several centuries has been the "buddhized" aspect of contemporaneous Nepalese Hinduism. Its hereditary clergy, its temple financial and social structures, and its adherence to a caste system, all are institutions that are a recasting of the parallel Hindu institutions.

THE REPLACEMENT OF RENUNCIATION BY REVERSAL AND CASTE

From the time of the Upanishads in the sixth century B.C., every branch of Indian religion — be it Brahmanism, Buddhism, Jainism, Vishnuism, or Shivaism — has presented two somewhat contradictory aspects. One is a transcendent, supramundane, mystic aspect whose chief concern is the attainment, through gnosis and ecstasy, of eternal happiness, peace, and bliss. The other aspect is of a religion concerned with mundane matters, with the worship of gods, and with the accumulation of meritorious action in order to secure either good fortune in one's present life or a fortuitous rebirth. The transcendental aspect La Vallée Poussin calls a "supramundane discipline" or "discipline of deliverance"; the mundane aspect, a "religion" (La Vallée Poussin 1917, 1937).

Within Buddhism there are two categories of practitioners: monks (*bhikshu*) who are concerned with deliverance and laymen (*upāsaka*) who, though they have taken refuge in the Buddha and in his doctrine (*Dharma*), hope to attain merit (*punya*) through the offering of alms to the monks and through worship of the Buddha and/or other deities. Initially Buddhism offered little in the way of rites and ceremonies for its lay devotees. There were no rites for marriage, for birth, or death. Indeed, it is most likely that for the majority of the Buddhist *upāsaka*, Brahmans continued to officiate at such life-crisis rites.

> As Buddhism did not impose or even propose any *substituta* for the traditional rites of the family life, it did not destroy these rites or jeopardize the position they assured to Brāhmans. To destroy them, it was not enough to preach that "although they might be useful for the present life, they are without utility for the next one (Aśoka)" (La Vallée Poussin 1937:170).

Thus the "lay Buddhist is not a Buddhist as concerns familiar life; as concerns all the needs of the daily life, he remains a Hindu" (La Vallée Poussin 1937:170).

Monks, on the other hand, were men devoted to the attainment of deliverance from rebirth. Although Buddhism never replaced Brahmanism, for centuries the Nepal Valley supported a flourishing community of monks who themselves pursued a devotional life aimed at deliverance. Buddhism, it is sometimes said, is not a true religion but merely a philosophical system practiced by monks. This view of the complete renunciatory nature of Buddhism is far too limited, although there can be little doubt that traditionally the strength of Buddhism has always been its monastic system. Yet, during the Malla period of Newar history the Buddhist monkhood underwent a transformation into a hereditary clergy. Buddhist priests came to serve on a hereditary basis as *purohita* [domestic priests] and to hold hereditary liturgical offices in Buddhist

temples for which they received prebends. Thus a Buddhist priesthood arose which served the same functions as its Brahman counterpart. The traditional domestic rites of Buddhist *upāsaka* were no longer performed by Hindu Brahmans but rather by Buddhist priests. Moreover, this hereditary priesthood now controls Buddhist shrines and temples. They now serve as temple caretakers and priests, and have been granted hereditary stipends which subsidize their ritual activities. It is they who continue to reside within Buddhist monasteries (*vihara*) not as monks but as married priests. It is their children who alone can be ordained as monks and who alone can be made into domestic priests.

Today among the Newars there is a caste of hereditary priests: the Bare. Bare is the shortened form of *Bandeju*, which in turn is the Newari for *Bandya*, a Sanskrit term used to designate persons entitled to reverence because of their extraordinary spirituality. Among the Bare there is a subcaste, the Vajracharya, whose members alone are empowered to act as *purohita* and who alone may perform *homa* [burnt offerings]. *Homa*, the most important of the sacrifices (*yajna*), is required in the celebration of all major rites of passage: the *samskara*. The Vajracharya's exclusive right to perform *homa* leads directly to his monopoly of the domestic priesthood, and the necessity of all to undergo rites of passage assures the Vajracharya of a clientele, thus placing the Vajracharya in a parallel position with the Hindu Brahman.

The very name Vajracharya signifies the important changes that occurred in Newar Buddhism. As Weber remarked, Buddhism in the Nepal Valley was penetrated by tantristic magic and ritual. The Vajracharya, or master of the adamantine path (Vajrayana), is no longer a monk but a *siddha*, a magician, one who gives the initiation and shows the way to a rapid acquisition of Buddhahood or who offers worldly advantages to those who employ his services.

For Newar Buddhism he who pursues the most sublime goal in life is the one who undergoes a special series of ceremonies of consecration and purification, who follows a special series of ritual observances, and who thereby gains knowledge of a mystic, magical nature. Thus the world of the absolute is intelligible only to those who have been initiated into special mysterious practices. Only those who pursue such mysterious rituals attain experience of the "Absolute." And only the specially initiated may participate in such mysteries.

The goal of deliverance is the same as is found in the more traditional forms of Buddhism. The difference lies in the respective attitudes toward the process whereby liberation is achieved. In Newar Buddhism there is greater moderation than the complete abandonment of the social world. True, the Vajracharya and the Bare consider the present world a place of suffering, uncleanliness, pain, disease, and death. But rather than overcome the limitations of physical existence through negation by withdraw-

ing from all that is distinctively human and social, the Vajracharya and Bare reject the actual human condition by becoming suprahuman beings, by becoming men who have passed beyond the impotence and suffering of ordinary experience. Outwardly the Vajracharya and Bare continue to observe the duties and to participate in the temporal pleasures of everyday life. Inwardly they practice meditations and rituals of purification in order to find release from the limitations of everyday life. Yet a significant change has occurred. For the Vajracharya and Bare the ultimate destiny of the individual is seen as inseparable from the personal fulfillment that a man gains through meeting the immediate needs and responsibilities of daily human life. While the ascetic and the monk individually remove themselves from society in order to achieve a condition of self-transcendence and emancipation, the Vajracharya and Bare remain integral members of the societal body; they are family men and priests.

Buddhism is, in the words of La Vallée Poussin (1917:4–15), "a discipline of deliverance": deliverance from rebirth and death, deliverance from continuation in the potentially endless cycle of rebirths, deliverance from the human condition of suffering, pain, illness, and death. The problem is deciding to whom this state of deliverance belongs: to the individual who renounces the social world and adopts the life of the monk with begging bowl, staff, and saffron robe, the life of one who elects to "die" with respect to the world of other men; or to the individual who conforms to the world of social responsibilities, who remains a householder. To the Newar Vajrayana Buddhist the homeless state of the renouncer means a state of aloofness and lack of compassion. Newar Buddhism rejects ascetic renunciation and the rejection is expressed in the adoption of its opposite: celebration of earthly pleasures and ritual use of alcohol, meat, and blood, and of sex. Renunciation is rejected and in its place one finds reversal. The renouncer attempts to experience the absolute by disengaging himself, by withdrawing from all that is either human or social. The Vajracharya and Bare, as practitioners of tantra (Vajrayana Buddhism), attempt to experience the "Absolute" by disengaging themselves from the human condition. This disengagement is accomplished by reversal: the monk withdraws from the social world; the Vajracharya and Bare reverse the values of the social world.

THE BARE AS A CASTE

Although Newar Buddhism rejects ascetic renunciation, the rituals and symbols of renunciation are still employed. Indeed, the very basis of the Newar priesthood is prior ordination as a monk. All Newar Buddhist priests — that is, all Vajracharya and all Bare — must undergo ordination

as monks. This ceremony of ordination is called *Bare chhuyigu* [the making into Bare]. Failure to undergo *Bare chhuyigu* entails loss of the right to act as priest and loss of the caste status of Bare. That is, a male who is born of Vajracharya and Bare parents but who has not been made into a Bare by undergoing *Bare chhuyigu* loses for himself the ritual and social status of being a Bare. He drops down to the level of the next highest Buddhist, that of Urhä. During my twenty-two months in Nepal I personally came across no actual instance of such a loss of caste rank and privilege, but I was continually told that in the not too distant past loss of Bare caste membership because of failure to be properly initiated was not unknown. During my stay there was one case of which I am personally aware in which a Bare whose family had moved outside the Nepal Valley to a rather remote hill market town never received the proper initiation, although his father had. When this uninitiated Bare returned to the monastery of his ancestors and requested that his sons be initiated, he was told that this would be impossible until he himself had become a Bare. Until this had occurred, his young sons were considered the sons of an Urhä, and hence not eligible for ordination. If the father had died before receiving ordination, his sons would have been permanently allotted to the caste of the Urhä. In this instance, the father first was made into a Bare and then his sons were initiated.

The need for initiation as well as credentials of proper birth would seem to be a peculiarity of the Buddhist Bare and, as such, to be a characteristic that distinguishes them from Hindu castes. Yet there is a parallel for the requirement of initiation within the Hindu tradition. The textual requirement of initiation is dismissed by Bouglé because "initiation, necessary as it is, is not sufficient in itself; nothing takes the place of the gift of race. One is born a Brahman, and cannot become one. *Nascitur, non fit*. The texts which would have us believe the contrary are no more than 'a device to glorify the supposed virtue and knowledge of the priests. . .' " (Bouglé 1971:56–57). However, whether the requirement of initiation is followed or not, it exists.

The rite of priestly ordination must be performed in a Newar Vajrayana monastery and only the sons of members of the monastery may undergo initiation in that *vihara*. All those who have undergone ordination within a single monastery are members of that monastery's *sangha*. The term *sangha*, in the Newar context, is the ecclesiastical corporation composed of all who have been ordained as monks (that is, the corporation of all those who have undergone the rite of *Bare chhuyigu*). In Nepal the transformation of the *sangha* into a closed corporation was concomitant with the development of an elaborate corpus of rituals based upon esoteric doctrines known only to the specially initiated, that is, the Bare. Thus it is the Bare who, as the only Newars eligible for initiation and membership in the *sangha*, are empowered to employ advanced Buddhist

meditative practices, to perform special tantric rites, and to serve the special tantric deities housed within their monasteries.

The Newar *vihara* is the center of the religious life of Newar Vajrayana, and through their control of these institutions the Bare are able to maintain their monopoly of the spiritual and secular benefits that accrue to them because they constitute the Newar Buddhist elite. Just as the *bhikshu* [monk] is thought to stand in a special relation to the Buddha and his teachings and to dwell on a special spiritual plane by virtue of his immediate or forthcoming approximation to enlightenment, so all the Bare, by virtue of their membership in the Newar *sangha*, lay claim to and validate their common status as an assembly of the elect.

THE VAJRACHARYA

All Bare, including the subcaste of Vajracharya, undergo initiation as monks and thereby become members of a monastery, but only those Bare whose fathers are Vajracharya are permitted to undergo a second consecration, that of *acharya abhisheka*. This second rite of consecration and purification empowers the Vajracharya to function as *purohita*.

A central aspect of Newar Buddhist ritual is the offering of sacrifice. All individuals when worshiping images make offerings. However, among Newar Buddhists, only the Vajracharya are permitted to perform the sacrifice of *homa*. *Homa* was originally a Vedic rite but has been incorporated into Newar Vajrayana, where it has come to play a significant role in the establishment of the special powers and privileges enjoyed by the Vajracharya. The actual rite of *homa* entails building a sacred fire (usually done in a small pit constructed for this purpose) into which offerings of grains and clarified butter are placed. Hymns, *mantras*, and *dharanis* are chanted in Sanskrit during the ritual. Although originally a Vedic rite, the deities invoked during the performance of *homa* are not those peculiar to the Vedic tradition, but rather are those now common to the Newar Vajrayana pantheon. The *homa* fire is identified with the deity whose aid and blessings are sought.

Particularly interesting is the close relationship between the ritual status of the Vajracharya who stand at the apex of the Buddhist caste hierarchy and their role as sacrificers. In discussing the amazing prestige of Brahmans, Bouglé states that they derive their special position from the unique "function reserved to them alone," that is, serving as "guardian of the sacrifice" (Bouglé 1971:58). Bouglé maintains that "the sacrificer becomes a 'sacred' being in himself: at once to be worshipped and dreaded" (1971:59). "Thus is explained the virtue of Brahmanic blood. It is natural that a people which more than any other, has magnified the action of sacrifice upon the order of the world should also imbue the

reaction of the sacrifice upon the sacrificer with particular significance. He who speaks to the gods seems a god himself: he who lights the sacred fire becomes *āgneya*, particularly in the nature of fire" (1971:60). This is as applicable to the Vajracharya as to the Brahmans. In their successful replication of the prerogatives and privileges of the Brahmans, the Vajracharya, because they managed to obtain a monopoly over the offering of *homa*, the most important of *yajnas*, secured a ritual status equivalent to that of the Hindu priest.

Homa is required in celebrating all major rites of passage, *samskaras*. The importance of these rites to Buddhists Newars, as noted above, assures the Vajracharya of a clientele. And indeed, the Vajracharya's sole right to conduct *homa* leads directly to his monopoly of the domestic priesthood among Buddhist Newars.

THE VAJRACHARYA AND THE DOMESTIC PRIESTHOOD

Although the role of *purohita* is the basis for the Vajracharya's ritual status, it is often of little economic importance to a Vajracharya's income. This is true both for rural areas, where the basis of the economic prosperity of the Vajracharya (as with all other Bare) is the ownership of land, and for urban centers, where secular occupations account for the wealth of the Buddhist clergy. To examine this and other questions, I conducted a random survey of Vajracharya, other Bare, and Deo Brahman households in the capital city of Kathmandu. I interviewed 100 out of a total of 439 Vajracharya households in Kathmandu. Among these 100, there were 201 males actively employed. Of these 56 served as *purohita* and 145 did not. That is, 28 percent of the male working force of these 100 households were active as *purohita*. Moreover, of the 56 Vajracharya who served as *purohita*, only 24 were solely employed as such; 32 pursued other occupations in addition to their duties as priests. Thus, only 11.9 percent of those males working had the sole occupation of *purohita*. All of the 24 men whose only occupation was that of *purohita* were elderly men who either had voluntarily retired from their secular occupations or, in many cases, were unwillingly excluded because of their age. Of the 145 males who were not *purohita*, 52 (36 percent) were members of households in which at least one male member served as *purohita*; 93 (64 percent) were members of households in which there were no men actively involved as household priests.

It can thus be seen that the role of the Vajracharya as *purohita*, although it may be of paramount importance in establishing the social and ritual distance separating the Vajracharya from other Bare subcastes, is not of great economic significance. Indeed, one may characterize the occupation of *purohita* as a part-time undertaking from which families

derive only a secondary income. Of the 100 Vajracharya families interviewed, only 3 derived their income solely from a man's employment as *purohita*; only 53 percent of these households derived any income at all from a member's employment as household priest. Thus the priesthood supplies only a secondary income, and is an occupation practiced by little more than half of the families interviewed.

The situation among Newar Brahmans is considerably different, and this, I think, is because of the small number of Deo Brahmans (that subcaste who serve as Newar Hindu *purohita*) in relation to the Hindu Newar population that seeks their services. In Kathmandu in 1971 there were only 39 Deo Brahman households, of which 24 (61.5 percent) derived their total income from the domestic priesthood. Fifteen of the 39 Deo Brahman households derived a supplementary income from the domestic priesthood. Thus, all the Deo Brahman households derived some income from the employment of at least one of its male members as *purohita*.

SECULAR OCCUPATION AND SUBCASTE SEGMENTATION

In Kathmandu the Vajracharya are set apart from other Bare, not only because they are eligible to serve as *purohita* but also because they follow substantially different secular occupations. Seventy-seven Vajracharya (38.3 percent) of the 201 men employed held jobs in the government bureaucracy. Thirty-two Vajracharya (15.9 percent) owned their own shops or businesses; 25 Vajracharya (12.4 percent) were employed by private corporations; 24 (11.9 percent) were *purohita* as their only occupation; 18 (9 percent) were artisans; 12 (6 percent) were physicians; 11 (5.5 percent) were teachers, lecturers, or professors; 1 (0.5 percent) was a policeman; and 1 (0.5 percent) was a lawyer. Of the 18 Vajracharya artisans, 9 were gold- and silversmiths, 3 were carpenters, 3 were tailors, 2 were capmakers, and 1 was a weaver. Of the 12 Vajracharya physicians, 2 were practitioners of Western medicine and had received training in hospitals in the West or in India, 8 were *vaidya* (practitioners of medicine based upon Newar and/or Indian concepts of medicine and upon Newar or Indian medications), and 2 were compounders, men trained to give injections, but who also prescribe medications for slight illnesses. Of the 11 Vajracharya employed in education, 3 were headmasters of primary or secondary schools, 6 were teachers in such schools, and 2 were lecturers or professors at one of the several colleges in the valley or at Tribhuvan University. Of the 77 Vajracharya in government service, 12 were first-grade officials, 22 second-grade officials, 26 third-grade officials, and 17 clerks.

In addition to the 100 Vajracharya households interviewed, 100

households of non-Vajracharya Bare were surveyed. Within these 100 households there was an active male working force of 182 men. Of these, 130 (71.4 percent) were artisans, of whom 104 men (57.2 percent) were goldsmiths, silversmiths, or manufacturers of gold or silver curios and art objects made for the tourist trade, 12 (6.6 percent) were carpenters, 8 (4.4 percent) were tailors, 4 (2.1 percent) were capmakers, and 2 (1.1 percent) were painters of religious pictures. Twenty-four men (13.2 percent) were employees of private corporations and businesses. Twenty men (11.0 percent) owned their own shops and businesses. Five men (2.7 percent) were in government service, 2 (1.1 percent) were physicians, and 1 (0.6 percent) was a teacher.

There are some rather significant contrasts between the occupational structure of the Vajracharya and that of the other Bare subcastes. The Vajracharya are predominantly in administration, clerical jobs, or the professions, whereas the other Bare subcastes are predominantly artisans and craftsmen. Moreover, the Vajracharya are in a greater diversity of occupations, while other Bare show a greater concentration of men who are employed in a single occupational category, that of artisan. The largest single category of Vajracharya is the 38.3 percent employed in the government bureaucracy, whereas 71.4 percent of the men of the other Bare subcastes are artisans.

THE VAJRACHARYA AND SACRIFICE

Although the role of sacrificer is of little economic importance, it is of great ritual and social significance. The ability and the right to perform sacrificial rites establishes and expresses the sacredness and purity of the priest. The Brahman and the Vajracharya, as priests empowered to perform sacrifices, must undergo an initiatory consecration. Indeed, it is this consecration that is seen as empowering them to perform such rites. They must be stripped of their temporal being and become born anew with new divine forms. All that touches the sacrifice must be sacred and so they, as sacrificers, are obliged to themselves become sacred beings. Thus, their purity is defined in terms of their relationship to the sacrifice.

The Brahman and the Vajracharya are supposed to pass from the world of ordinary men into that of the gods. They transcend the dichotomy of the sacred and the mundane, and as such they are anomalous. But their anomaly is of greater magnitude than this. As priests they are concerned with satisfying the ritual and religious needs of the communities in which they serve. As priests they are also concerned with the activities and desires of their patrons. They perform rituals for the attainment of material ends: prosperity, health, success, etc. And most importantly, as priests they are intimately enmeshed in relationships of mutual inter-

dependence. Thus, the Brahman and the Vajracharya are examples not only of the sacred permanently existing within the realm of the social and mundane but also of the sacred confined and contained within a network of economic and social exchanges. Not only is the patron dependent upon the priest, but the priest is also dependent upon his patron. In order to gloss over this contradiction, there is the mystifying ideology that the Brahman and the Vajracharya are *not* tied to the social, are not involved in an endless cycle of mutual exchanges, for this would mean that the sacred is bound by the mundane; instead they are said to be free from all ties of dependence.

The Brahman ideally is held to embody and express the ideology of the ascetic. Indeed, it is because he embodies the values of asceticism that his role as priest, a role that certainly is life affirming in its orientation, is validated. For J. C. Heesterman ". . . it is the renunciation ideology, that opens a way for the brahmin to enter into viable relations with the world without losing his purity. Having emancipated himself from the world the renouncer can from his sphere of independence reenter into relations with the world where he now enjoys unequalled prestige" (Heesterman 1964:30). For Heesterman it is clear that according to Hindu texts the ideal Brahman is the renouncer, as only the renouncer is held to be completely independent of the world and its social relations.

> Thus being self-contained and independent the true brahmin does not take part in the pure-impure complementarity and exchange. His purity is not dependent on his partners, it is absolute. On this basis he can dispense religious merit by accepting food and presents without staking his purity. But the condition is that he holds on to his independence and does not engage in the world. As a specialist of religious merit he can be called a priest. But in this sense he can only be a priest by virtue of renunciation. Thus the preeminence of the brahmin is not based on his priesthood but on his being the exponent of the values of renunciation (1964:31).

Just as the ideal Brahman is a renouncer of all that is social and of all ties that bind one in mutually dependent relationships, so the ideal Vajracharya is a renouncer of the world and its mundane concerns. All Vajracharya are initiated as monks, men who leave the world of mundane concerns and seek deliverance. Even though, in point of fact, they return to the world of the social, they are said to continue to embody the values of the ascetic. The Vajracharya reject monkhood both in the sense of becoming householders and in their assumption of a religious role that rejects the role of monk, and yet they continue to employ the symbolism of monkhood and asceticism as a justification for their status as priests.

Their priesthood entails relationships of exchange and of interdependency, but like the *sannyasin* they are said to exist in a state of complete nonattachment and complete nondependence. For it is his symbolic role of "renouncer" that opens the way for the priest to enter into social

relations without losing his purity or without jeopardizing his ascendancy over the mundane and the social. The ascetic is thought to be capable of reentering mundane social involvements without "renouncing" any aspect of his special powers or prerogatives that he has gained through "renunciation." It is said that the truly controlled ascetic may even be a householder and still retain his realization of deliverance. By identifying with the role of the ascetic, the priest thus establishes his right to remain within the limitations and confines of the mundane world without loss of his purity or ritual superiority. On the one hand, the priest's purity relies upon an ideology of independence and renunciation; on the other, it entails the interdependency of patron-client ties. This contradiction is glossed over by the supposition that the priest, by embodying the values and ideology of the "ascetic," can exist within the world of ordinary men and yet remain "pure" and free from its contaminations.

Perhaps this is mere mystification propagated by obscurantist priests as Rosser (1966:69) would have us believe, but I think one cannot overlook the very important factor that this ideology is accepted by the Newars themselves. As Rosser himself has stated, the dominant position of the priest ". . . has been made secure to the extent to which he has been able to disseminate these mystical theories" (1966:69). Moreover, because the ideology of renunciation lies at the basis of the Vajracharya's preeminence, because the ideal Vajracharya is considered as being free from the attachments of the social world, free from considerations of material existence, we can in part account for that peculiarity of the caste system, namely, why the ritual status of the priest is higher than that of the ruler, why an impoverished priest does not lose his high ritual rank. Status is differentiated from power; the ritual and religious are distinguished from the social or natural, and are considered superior.

If this seems to be only blind acceptance of elitist rationalizations on my part, let me quote from a taped conversation of a Newar of low-caste rank:

> Ordinary men must be concerned with their bodies and their physical well-being. But the Vajracharya does not do this. The true Vajracharya is sufficient unto himself. Moreover, ordinary men are afraid of death. But the true Vajracharya is not afraid, as he knows that with death release comes for him. Moreover, it seems that some Vajracharya never actually die. For example, one can still talk of Shri Shantikar Vajracharya. He was born many years ago: perhaps more than 30,000 years ago. Though he was born a man, a man just like you and I, he attained the gift of living 50,000 years. He can do anything. Today we can go to Swayambhu and visit his shrine. Is he alive? Or is he dead? No one can say for certain. But if you are in need of help, he can answer your prayers. Such a man is what one can call a true Vajracharya. He can see what will happen in the future. He can fly through the air. He can tell you what happened in the past, not only in the recent past but in past lives. I know that the Vajracharya one meets today are not always like Shantikar is. You would have to be a fool not to realize the failings of ordinary

Vajracharya. But they are not real Vajracharya. They only act as priests for what they can get. Yet we respect even these sorts of Vajracharya as we think of them as more like the true Vajracharya than men like you or I.

CASTE AND RITE

The principle of hierarchy is fundamental to the structure of the caste system. This principle is derived from the opposition of purity and pollution: that is, hierarchy arises because purity is differentiated from and made superior to pollution. In turn, the polarity of pure/impure implies the superiority of a social category of pure priest at the top and a social category of the polluted at the opposite end of the hierarchy. Among the Newars there are Brahmans who administer to the ritual needs of Hindu households, as well as Vajracharya who function as Buddhist *purohita*. Thus the Brahman's ritual role is duplicated by the Vajracharya. At the bottom of the hierarchy is a group of castes that are denied access to the services of either the Brahman or Vajracharya. These castes constitute a polluted social category.

The opposition between the pure and the impure, between priest and pariah, is a ritualistic matter. Caste purity is born out of ritual, as purity is seen as being derivative of purificatory ceremonies and not as merely a natural state. Indeed, the state of impurity is identified with the organic and natural, and an opposition between the "religious" and the "natural" is established. All men are born impure, but only some are then purified through a series of special ceremonies. The ultimate goal of such purificatory rites is the attainment of deliverance and hence escape from limitations and contaminations of the "organic" and the "natural." The ritual status of Newar castes is conceptualized, not as inherent attributes invested by nature at birth, but as ritually derived gradings, each reflecting a difference in degree of purity. Untouchables are those who, being denied access to ritual specialists of purification, remain in the "natural" polluted state. The "twice-born" are members of castes who are entitled to initiation. As Hocart so correctly points out:

> The son of a brahman is not really a brahman till he has been initiated into the caste of his father. In a good family he will be initiated as a matter of course, and so is thought of as a brahman before he really is one, just as our king is thought of as a king before his coronation, though strictly speaking, he should still not be, and cannot wear the crown. Our Coronation ceremony however has traveled much further on the road to survival than the Indian initiation. If it were omitted, it would make no difference. If it were omitted, the brahmanic youth [would] fall to the status of vratya; at least it was so when and where Manu's laws were written. A nobleman's, a priest's and a farmer's rank thus still depends not only on birth, but on initiation. Birth itself is inadequate (Hocart 1950:55–56).

This very same point was told to me by a Vajracharya pandit in the following taped interview:

A girl during her first menstrual period releases some poisons from her womb. If this is exposed to the sun, the sun itself would become impure. If this poison is exposed to living plants they would suffer diseases and die. If this poison is exposed to her male kinsmen, her brothers or her father and uncles, they would become impure and also might suffer many misfortunes. So a girl during the time of her menstruation should be kept in a room; she cannot go outside, even, or should I say especially, into a secluded garden. Nor can she be visited or seen by any males. Moreover, all sunlight must be kept out of the room; one must remember that the sun, Surya, is a male god. In the same way the Pore and Chyami [two Newar sweeper castes of unclean status] are full of poison and are unclean and polluted. No persons of high caste can touch them or take food or water from them without themselves becoming impure. The Pore and Chyami are impure because they have not undergone the necessary rites of purification.

From the very beginning of one's life one must perform the necessary ceremonies. Those who do not perform the rite of purification, *benekegu* [literally "ending ceremony," the last, or ending, ceremony performed after a birth and after the period of mourning following a death, as well as the ceremony that purifies those who temporarily have been in a state of ritual pollution], after birth are automatically of low caste. The Pore and Chyami do not begin their lives with this ceremony and hence are impure right from the beginning.

When a lost person is declared or considered to be dead, funeral rites have to be performed for him. But sometimes it can happen that the lost person considered dead turns up alive. But he cannot just reenter his house or rejoin his family after funeral rites have been performed for him. In order to again become a part of society he must go through a simple ceremony. First, he is put into a *tepa* [large earthen vessel used for storage] and he has to break out from it. Then he is considered to be reborn again, for the second time. The pot is like a womb and because he was again in "the womb" he must go through the purification ceremony as any other newly born child. Only then is he eligible to rejoin his family.

The Vajracharya have more ceremonies of purification than any other caste and so are superior to all others. We and the Bare alone are tonsured, and so we alone are pure among the Buddhists. We alone receive *vajra abhisheka* and thus in comparison to the Bare are the more pure. Just as the man considered as dead is born anew and purified, so we Vajracharya are born anew as *tantrikas* and are the most purified among men.

Caste among the Newars, as well as in the rest of South Asia, can be seen to be directly related to a transition from individual states of occasional or temporary impurity (or the reverse, that is, to individual states of occasional or temporary purity) to the permanent impurity of certain groups (as well as the reverse, the permanent purity of other groups). The Newars are well aware of this transition. This is particularly true for Buddhist Newars. Traditional Vajrayana Buddhism always has contained a series of stages or steps of spiritual advancement based upon the completion of initiatory rites and the mastery of advanced techniques of ritual and meditative practices. Access to such rites and practices was

open to all who desired to pursue the path toward enlightenment. Now initiation has been coupled with heredity.

Diksha is a ceremony whereby one is initiated into a particular cult or whereby one is given a special tutelary or protective deity. It is a generic term applied to all such rites of initiation and purification whether they be Buddhist or Hindu. At one time *diksha* was the rite of preparation of the sacrificer for the sacrifice of *homa* (Hubert and Mauss 1964:20). All that touched upon the gods had to be divine: "the sacrificer is obliged to become a god himself in order to be capable of acting upon them" (1964: 20). Among the Newars, though optional in character, *diksha* is a prerequisite for the attainment of any higher meditative states and for the performance of the higher forms of tantric rituals. The initiation itself may be elaborate or simple, but it is always centered on the giving of a sacred formula (*mantra*) to the disciple by a *guru* [master]. When one receives *diksha*, one is said to be purified and made fit to worship the particular deity into whose cult the adept is initiated.

Only the Vajracharya may receive the *diksha* of Vajrasattva, that deity considered to be the divine *guru*, just as the Vajracharya are said to be mortal *guru*. When the adept receives the *diksha* of a particular deity, he is thought to become that deity himself. Or perhaps one should say that the adept miraculously is absorbed into the deity and so takes on his powers. In any case, it is significant that the supernatural and spiritual powers of the deity then cling to the adept, even after the ceremony is completed. Were others freely admitted into the cult of Vajrasattva, they too would be empowered to act as tantric *guru*.

In the following transcription of a taped interview, a Vajracharya pandit explains how the Vajracharya is both a religious state acquired through merit and initiation, and a caste role restricted by factors of heredity and birth. Caste is seen as a social institution rooted in history. It was created by men and subject to change. Yet its strictures determine who can and who cannot be purified through ritual initiation.

QUESTION: Can only the sons of men of the priestly Buddhist caste be initiated as priests?

PANDIT: At the time of the Tathagatha anyone could be ordained a monk. Later this policy had to be changed because the Malla king, Jayasthiti Malla, established a system of caste according to which everyone was to follow a special occupation which was allotted to him. So, as a rule, everyone can be ordained as a priest if they want to follow the Buddha *Dharma*. But really only the sons of priests can become priests.

QUESTION: So while Hindus in Nepal follow a system of caste because of their religion, the Buddhists do so only because this was a system established by a king?

PANDIT: Caste in Nepal is only the rule of the king and not of the *Dharma*. In the Hindu *Dharma* many sages made rules about who is touchable and who is not. In the Buddha *Dharma* there is no concern about this. The Buddha cares only about who has knowledge (*gyana*) and who is without *gyana*.

QUESTION: Then there is no untouchability according to Buddhists?
PANDIT: The Buddha introduced a differentiation between touchables and untouchables in terms of pure and impure. A man who has a power of becoming pure and of making others pure can easily recognize impurities in others. Another way of saying this is that the Buddha discriminated between the civilized and the uncivilized.
QUESTION: In what ways are the untouchables uncivilized?
PANDIT: The *achhut* [unclean] are born of unclean mothers. A woman during her menstruation should keep herself separate, then no impure being will be born from her. But if some do not purify themselves, they will give birth to impure children. Until such children attain the *gyana* of the Buddha, they will remain impure.
QUESTION: Are persons of unclean castes permanently impure?
PANDIT: Yes and no. According to Manjushri and the Buddha, all can become pure through the possession of *gyana*. But once a living creature takes birth in an impure family, he really can never become pure in this life. Nothing comes of nothing. A duck's egg always produces a duck.
QUESTION: At one time the Mandharas [oil presser caste] were of unclean status, but now all can take water from them and also all foods except boiled rice, dahl, etc.
PANDIT: Since the Maharajah himself ordered the people to take water, etc., from the Saimi [another, slightly derogatory, name for the Mandharas], the people had to carry out this order; and today we are the *purohita* of the Saimi and take most sorts of food from them. So you see caste is really a matter of the king. The king can make untouchables clean and people of clean caste, untouchable.
QUESTION: Even among all those who are of clean status there exist grades of different rank. Why is this?
PANDIT: In part it is a question of work. The Jyapus [farmer caste] work in the fields, so they get very little chance to purify themselves. The Chyami are the people who sweep away dirt and filth, so they are dirty themselves. The Vajracharya are priests, so they do very pure acts all day long. But even more than just the occupation of the caste is the way they perform the *samskara* [rites of purification]. The Vajracharya are the highest because they have the greatest number of *samskara* and because they are the strictest about their performance. When the Saimi were raised in rank, we became their *purohita* and so helped them to become pure not only officially but also according to the *Dharma*.
QUESTION: So if the Vajracharya wanted to, why couldn't they abolish the whole caste system by initiating and purifying everyone?
PANDIT: They could not do this because caste determines who can and cannot be purified and who are to remain impure. Castes may have been created by a king, but he had his reasons. The division of society into castes is now our traditional custom, and so we must follow the way of our ancestors. Only the Vajracharya and Bare have the time and the desire to devote their lives to the *Dharma*. Other castes also must follow the ways of their ancestors. It is only the duty of the Vajracharya to be priests.

SUMMARY

Buddhism has always developed out of a dialectical interaction with Hinduism, and Newar Buddhism is the "buddhized" aspect of contem-

poraneous Nepalese Hinduism. Its hereditary clergy, its temple financial and social structures, and its adherence to a caste system all are institutions recasting parallel Hindu institutions.

In discussing aspects of the Newar Buddhist priesthood, I have examined the nature of the relationship between Buddhism and asceticism as seen through Newar replacement of the usual Buddhist monastic structure with a married clergy that became distinguished as a caste — the Bare — among whom the subcaste Vajracharya are alone empowered to perform the sacrifices and burnt offerings required in all major rites of passage.

Newar Buddhism was penetrated by tantristic magic and ritual, and the Vajracharya, no longer a celibate monk, became a magician who gives initiation and shows the way to acquisition of Buddhahood or who offers worldly advantages to those who employ his services. For the Vajracharya and Bare the ultimate destiny of the individual is seen as inseparable from the personal fulfillment a man gains through meeting the immediate needs and responsibilities of daily human life.

Although Newar Buddhism rejects ascetic renunciation, the rituals and symbols of renunciation are still employed as the basis for Newar priesthood. Ritual ordination as monks makes the initiates Bare, giving them all the ritual and social status derived therefrom. A further ritual of consecration and purification distinguishes the subcaste Vajracharya and empowers them to act as domestic priests with the unique right to perform the sacred sacrifice.

While the role of Vajracharya as domestic priests is of paramount importance in establishing the social and ritual distance distinguishing them from other Bare subcastes, it is not of great economic significance. Yet the ability and right to perform sacrificial rites establishes and expresses the sacredness and purity of the priests.

We have also seen how Brahman and Vajracharya are examples not only of the sacred permanently existing within the realm of the social and mundane, but of the sacred confined and contained within a network of economic and social exchanges. The Newars accept the doctrine that the priests, by embodying the values and ideology of the "ascetic," can exist within the world of ordinary men and yet remain "pure" and free from its contaminations. Because of this, status is differentiated from power, and the ritual and religious are differentiated from the social or natural and considered superior.

The principle of hierarchy fundamental to the structure of the caste system is derived from the opposition of purity and pollution, where purity is made superior to pollution. In turn, this polarity implies the superiority of a social category of pure priest at the top and polluted man at the bottom. This is exemplified by clean castes being served by Brahmans and Vajracharya while pariah groups are denied their services.

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Structure and Change of a Newari Festival Organization

HIROSHI ISHII

This paper describes and analyzes some aspects of the social structure of a Newari village in the Kathmandu Valley in Nepal. Emphasis here is on the organization of the Jatra, the biggest festival in this village.

GENERAL BACKGROUND

Satepa,[1] a Newari village about seven kilometers west of Kathmandu, contains 1,121 people of eight Newari castes. Administratively it forms a part of a village *panchayat,* also called Satepa, in which one more Newari village smaller than Satepa is included. (For the present purpose, analysis will be mainly concentrated on Satepa proper and not on the Satepa *panchayat*; the name Satepa will be used only for Satepa proper unless otherwise noted.)

Satepa is a rather small village among the settlements of the Newars, for most of the Newari villages in the Kathmandu Valley have populations over 3,000. Still, Satepa's outlook is quite similar to that of other villages. It is an extremely concentrated settlement with brick buildings of three or four stories, mostly adjoining and in rows. In a few cases these rows are grouped with large or small squares in the middle, which offer people places for daily work, play, and ritual practice.

Electricity was brought to the village for the first time in the summer of 1971, and now most of the houses have electric lighting. Other electric

This fieldwork was undertaken from January 1970 to February 1972, with a scholarship from the Japanese Ministry of Education, to which I am deeply indebted. Intensive study of the village was undertaken from June 1970 to February 1972, with a few months of absence from it in the year 1971.

[1] Names of villages, wards, and persons are all fictitious. Well-known names for cities and a few places are unchanged.

equipment, however, is still scarce. For fifteen years water has been supplied by pipe from a spring two kilometers from the village. Water, not sterilized but clean, flows all day from two water taps placed on both sides of the village's central square. Water for drinking and cooking is carried to each house by women of all castes. Still, most washing is done in the pond or river nearby.

On the outskirts of the village are paddy fields. Most of them are situated on a flat land and irrigated by means of small ditches. Some are on terraces, parts of which are not irrigated. Rice in the monsoon season and wheat in the dry season are the two principal crops. Some parts of the paddy fields are planted to pulse or potatoes in winter. Maize, mustard, chili, and vegetables are minor crops.

Agriculture is the main occupation of the villagers, but other jobs have been gaining importance in their lives. Though 181 households (93 percent) out of the total number of 194 are more or less engaged in agriculture, only 71 households (37 percent) are solely dependent on agriculture and minor domestic work (mainly animal husbandry and weaving). There are 110 households (57 percent) which depend both on agriculture and other jobs of their male members. Most of these jobs are sought in Kathmandu. It takes only thirty minutes and half a rupee by bus from Satepa to Kathmandu. Some people, however, avoid spending this amount, walking all the way for an hour and a half.

No women go out for jobs, but out of 314 males above fifteen years of age, 175 (56 percent) work in areas other than agriculture. Most of their employment is temporary. Very few are wage earners. And even those who work for wages do not require much education. Carpentry, brick masonry, and coolie labor are the most popular kinds of jobs. These three together attract more than 90 people. Opportunities for such employment in Kathmandu seem to have increased in recent years, because of an expansion of construction in the capital.

Petty trade is also popular; there are twenty-nine middlemen handling grain, wood, buffaloes, or milk, some of whom (especially the Nay caste in the buffalo trade) are restricted to certain castes. There are eleven small shops in the village, the distribution of which also follows caste lines to some extent.[2] The fact that no Jyapu is a shopkeeper is remarkable.

The names of eight Newari castes resident in this village are: Barum (Bahun or Brahman),[3] Syesyo (Shrestha), Jyapu (Maharjan), Duin (Putuwar), Kau (Nakarmi), Saymi (Manandhar), Nay (Kasain), and Jugi (Kusle). Among the Syesyos, there are subgroups, such as Joshis and

[2] Eight shops (six grocery shops, a wood shop, and a tea shop) are owned by Syesyos. One blacksmith shop is owned by a Kau. Another tea shop is opened by a Saymi. Two or three times a week a Nay opens his buffalo meat shop. (And near the end of my stay in Satepa a Duin opened a grocery shop, which is not counted in the number here.)

[3] Caste names without parentheses are given by the villagers as Newari names whereas those with parentheses are explained as being Nepali names.

Pradham.[4] Joshis claim to be higher than others, and still keep themselves distinct from others in ritual practices, such as the keeping of sacred thread and the morning worship of the sun. Nowadays they intermarry and freely eat with other Syesyos: this makes distinction within a caste quite small.

The population, number of households, and average household size of each caste are shown in Table 1. In terms of population, Jyapus form the biggest group and Syesyos come next. These two groups monopolize the village politics and are rivals. Other castes are of minor size and political power.

Table 1. Population by caste and by household

Names of Castes*	Number of households	Population by caste			Average household size
		Male	Female	Total	
Barum (Bahun, Brahman)	1	1	3	4	4
Syesyo (Shrestha)	63	204	185	389	6.17
Jyapu (Maharjan)	100	282	286	568	5.68
Duin (Putuwar)	10	20	21	41	4.1
Kau (Nakarmi)	1	4	5	9	9
Saymi (Manandhar)	1	3	5	8	8
Nay (Kasain)	17	50	50	100	5.88
Jugi (Kusle)	1	0	2	2	2
Total	194	564	557	1.121	5.78

*Corresponding Nepali caste names are shown in parentheses.

As is usually seen in caste societies, the notion of hierarchy also exists here. Even when only asked which caste comes higher, villagers can give fairly unanimous views about the hierarchical order shown in Table 2. Not only the overall view of hierarchy but also commensal regulation is important in relation to the notion of ritual hierarchy.

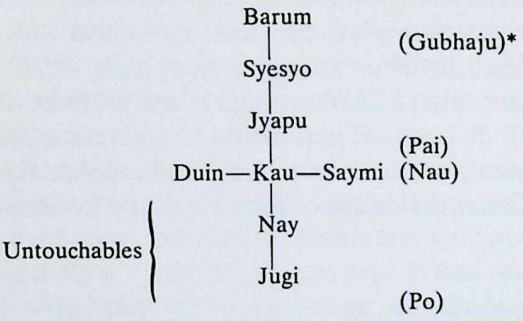
This is expressed most clearly in the taking of cooked rice. Usually, lower castes can take cooked rice from higher castes, but certain castes abstain from accepting it from each other. Thus none of the Duin, Kau, and Saymi accept cooked rice from each other, and about their ritual hierarchy other villagers' opinions differ from person to person. Because it is impossible (and unnecessary) to decide which of them should be placed higher they are classified on the same level in Table 2.

All castes are endogamous. However, some cases of intermarriage are said to have taken place in which a person of higher status lost his or her original status and fell to his or her spouse's status.

Occupational specialization according to castes is not very clear-cut except for extreme minority groups. The Barum (Brahman) is a Hindu priest and a new immigrant. In return for his service in special rituals, he is

[4] All the Syesyos in this village are said to belong to Chathari.

Table 2. Caste hierarchy in Satepa



*Castes whose names are shown in parentheses are not resident in Satepa. The explanation about them is given in the text.

assigned a certain amount of the crops. Besides, he is paid in kind and cash for occasional household rituals.

Syesyos, Jyapus, and Duins depend heavily on agriculture but they also engage in other work as already stated. We can see certain caste differences here. Jyapus are said to be farmers, but nowadays the proportion of male farmers also doing paid work to the total Jyapu adult male population is almost the same as that among the Syesyos. Duins also combine farming and paid work.

The Kau is a specialized blacksmith who works not only for Satepa villagers but also for the people of nearby villages. About half his patrons pay him in cash, whereas others give him a fixed amount of grain.

The Saymis who are traditionally said to be oil pressers here have a tea shop and till their own land. The Nays are said to be butchers. In this village, however, not all of them engage in butchery or the buffalo trade. Some of them are agricultural laborers, some work as firewood middlemen, and some as unskilled coolie laborers. Certain Nay women serve as cutters of the umbilical cord. They are paid in grain.

The Jugis have various obligations in ritual matters, as a reward for which they collect crops from the villagers on the spot at the harvest. In daily life they till the soil.

Services of these eight castes are insufficient for the daily life of the villagers. Most of the Jyapus, Duins, Saymis, and Kaus hire Buddhist priests, *Gubhaju*s from a nearby town. These are paid a fixed amount of grain yearly as well as a small amount in cash and kind on ceremonial occasions. Naus [barbers] come from a nearby town for villagers' haircuts, etc. They are paid in grain after the harvest. Po (Pode) and Pai (Pahari) are required and called to the village for important rituals.

Two Damais have tailor shops in this village. They do not live in Satepa but come from their houses one hour's walk away. Most of the villagers pay them in cash though a few people prefer to give a fixed amount of

grain for their yearly service. Damais are the only Parbates who have close contact with the daily life of the villagers.

Distribution of landholdings according to castes shows us caste distinction to some extent. The system of land tenure in Satepa is not so simple as to allow careless treatment. Here, for the convenience of explanation, however, the matter will be simplified as much as possible. Let us regard all the lands except those cultivated under tenancy as "owned."[5] Then the caste per capita average of owned land would be calculated as follows in ropani:[6] Brahman, 0; Syesyo, 1.68; Jyapu, 1.26; Duin, 0.87; Kau, 0; Saymi, 0.50; Nay, 0.19; Jugi, 1.00.

We might be justified in saying that these figures show a tendency for higher castes to have more owned land than lower castes, although there are exceptions such as Barum, Kau, and Jugi, each of whom has only one household represented in Satepa and has little significance in determining the tendency.

The percentage of the households that own no land in each caste is as follows: Brahman, 100 percent; Syesyo, 8.1 percent; Jyapu, 11 percent; Duin, 30 percent; Kau, 100 percent; Saymi, 0 percent; Nay, 58.8 percent; Jugi, 0 percent. Here, also, we can see the same strong tendency. The lower the caste the greater the percentage of landless people.

Though there are some chances of employment for the landless people as agricultural laborers within the village, those people who are without any land or traditional occupation of their own usually have to seek jobs outside the village. Most of the Duins and some Syesyos, Jyapus, and Nays fall in this category and they have to go to the capital in search of employment.

ORGANIZATION OF THE VISHNUDEVI FESTIVAL

The Jatra festival of the goddess Vishnudevi[7] is the biggest festival of Satepa. In this village it is usually referred to only as the "Jatra." The Jatra is held around the end of November and the beginning of December according to the people's lunar calendar. A dozen surrounding villages celebrate the same occasion in the names of their own village gods or goddesses. This is called Nhay Ga ya Jatra [the festival of seven villages], though the number of those villages exceeds seven.

In the celebration of this Nhay Ga ya Jatra, however, intervillage collaboration is of little importance, except for the occasion when four

[5] Under this heading not only *raikar* lands but also *guthi* lands, lands taken by mortgage and leased lands are included. I realize that this is too much of an oversimplification but hope this serves the present purpose.

[6] 1 *ropani* = 0.051 hectare.

[7] Vishnudevi is a Tantric goddess and, according to Pal (1970:112–115), may be identified with Vaisnavi.

palanquins of four of the villages gather together at Ba:khu,[8] a holy place one kilometer east of Satepa, near a temple of the goddess Vishnudevi, believed to be the mother of Satepa.

The Jatra lasts more than a week. The first day is called Nyutan. It is a day of preparation. Images of the goddess and the other gods are washed and put in a basket. Villagers from all the households come and pay homage to the *Dhaki Deo* [Goddess in the Basket]. Four days after that comes Chewlabu. This is the beginning of the central five days of the festival. Very early in the morning, a buffalo sacrificial rite is performed in front of the goddess Vishnudevi in Ba:khu.

The next day is Muya. Also before dawn on this morning a secret sacrifice with fire is made by the Silan *guthi* (a socioreligious group described below) in Ba:khu. In the village the goddess is enshrined in the palanquin and decorated with flowers and leaves. All through this day the villagers come in groups and give homage to her. Early next morning, the palanquin is carried to Ba:khu, where three palanquins of other villages also come together. Lengthy worships are performed by the elders of each village.

After dawn in Ba:khu there is a joyful gathering of crowds of people from surrounding villages, all celebrating the same occasion. After the worship is over, the people carry their palanquins back to their own villages. This day is called Sinaya. It is followed by a day of rest called Sulan.

Jatra Sidhaigu is the last day of the main period. An empty palanquin and the goddess in the basket are separately paraded about the village. Three days after this, a small finishing-up *puja* worship (*Pyenhu bica*) is offered by the elders. All the decoration for the festival is taken away, the palanquin is put in the warehouse, the ban on irreverent music is ended, and Jatra ends.

Although more than half of the village population depends on Buddhist priests (*Gubhaju*s) for its household rituals, all the villagers of Satepa celebrate this festival of a Tantric goddess. Though people from every household come for worship during the Jatra, the most important and obligatory rituals are carried out by special groups and personnel.

It has been said that socioreligious organizations called *guthi* are important in Newari society. Satepa is no exception.[9] In the Vishnudevi Jatra five *guthis* are responsible for special worship and activities. Four of them are monopolized by Syesyos and are assigned some land. One is a *guthi* organized by Jyapus and is not entitled to land. (Details of

[8] Anderson (1971:199–200) briefly refers to Nhyaya Gaya Jatra and Bakhu Besin Debi, which are the same festival and goddess as those mentioned here. (Incidentally, Ba:khu is a Newari place name.)

[9] *Guthi* when referred to by the villagers of Satepa does not mean feast, but is only used for indicating socioreligious groups (Fürer-Haimendorf 1956:24).

each *guthi* will be given in the section describing the activities of each caste.)

Various festival expenses including those of the *guthis* are met with income from lands assigned for the execution of the Jatra. There are more than thirty plots of land, the total area of which amounts to only a little more than two hectares. These are called *deo ya bun* [god's land][10] and are exempted from land tax. Of these, 35 percent (0.7 hectares) are assigned to the four *guthis* and are cultivated by six Syesyos and two Jyapus. Another 14 percent (0.3 hectares) are set aside for payment for the services of lower castes, such as Pai, Duin, and Jugi. Duins cultivate the land for themselves, but other plots of the land of this kind are cultivated by six Syesyos. The rest, 51 percent (1.1 hectares), are for miscellaneous use and are cultivated by seven Jyapus.

Income from this kind of land is used for the repair of the Vishnudevi temple and for the purchase of wood, various worship requisites such as a water buffalo or a sheep for sacrifice, flowers, sacred red powder, decoration of the palanquin, etc.

Except for a few plots that are cultivated by the people of nearby villages, most of the land is cultivated by the Satepa villagers. They are called *mohi* [tenant] by whom the goddess is paid a fixed amount of revenue. Except for one small plot, there is no intermediary holder, and the *mohis* pay directly.

The amount of revenue differs from plot to plot according to the grade of land.[11] Formerly, all the payment was made in kind, but now cash payment is favored more and more. The approximate payment ratio to the harvest from land was around one-fifth. However, for several years, this ratio has been falling considerably because of the introduction of improved paddy and wheat, which has almost doubled the yield. Thus, the fixed revenue rate has had the effect benefiting to the cultivators.

The right of the cultivators to land seems to be secure. As far as one wishes to continue to be a *mohi*, one's right is respected. This right can be inherited by one's heirs. The alienation of the right is also possible with the consent of the people in control of the formal matters of the Jatra, and this is sanctioned by the government.

[10] According to the Nepali system of land tenure, this kind of land is classified as *guthi* land. The term *guthi* in this sense must, however, be distinguished from that indicating the socioreligious organizations. Thus, here, in order to avoid confusion, I follow the usage of the villagers and use the term "god's land" throughout my description.

[11] I was told that the amount of revenue per *ropani* according to the grading of land was as follows:

awal : 23 *pathi* (of paddy)
doyam : 18 *pathi* (of paddy)
sin : 13 *pathi* (of paddy)

These figures are the same as the rates of rents in Kathmandu Valley stated by Regmi (1968:54, 56). I suppose this indicates the completion of the enforcement of the uniform schedule of assessment rates for *raikar* and *guthi* lands in the area.

Those people who are in charge of such formal matters of the Jatra as the management of the god's land are the elders of the Syesyos. An account book of the Jatra is kept in the house of the ranking Syesyo elder, the *thakali.* All the income and expenditures of the Jatra (including those of the *guthis*) are registered by seven Syesyo elders,[12] and no one can look into this book unless all of them are present.

Thakali is a term which means the eldest male of the highest generation of a group of which he is regarded as a ritual head. And *thakalis* are found in various groups at different social levels.

The *thakali* of the Syesyos is the most important person in the Jatra. He must be present and preside at most important occasions of worship, such as the sacrificial rites on the days of Chwelabu and Muya. He is the most responsible person in the management of every process of the Jatra, including the control over the revenue from the god's land. It should be noted that all through the festival the chief performer of the worship is not a Barum (Brahman) but this Syesyo *thakali.* As will be stated later, the *thakalis* of the Jyapus, the Duins, and the Nays are also indispensable.

The notion of seniority is the first key to the seat of *thakali.* As long as one *thakali* continues to live, no one can take his place, however ill or incapable he may be. Membership in certain kin groups is another key to it. Within each caste, there is a distinction between those who are entitled to the seat of *thakali* and those who are not. Not only the difference of access to the seat of *thakali* but also the distinction concerning other rights and duties in the Jatra is marked along this line.

Here, the word *thya* is important. Literally, *thya* means "relevant" and when vaguely asked, villagers say that all the residents of this village are *thya* in the Jatra in the sense that everyone joins in the worship of the goddess Vishnudevi on this occasion. However, in a strict sense, all the villagers are not *thya* in the execution of the Jatra. Those who are *thya* (*thyapin*) are obliged to carry out all the formal functions. Those who are not (*mathyapin*) merely celebrate the Jatra without any specified duty. And the most important duty of the *thyapin* is the acceptance of the job of *thakali* in turn according to seniority.

This difference of ritual rights and duties according to groups seems to have arisen from the order of precedence of settlement and immigration into this village. A legend concerning the establishment of Satepa is still remembered by some of the villagers:

At the time of Newari kings, there was a Syesyo minister under a king of Patan. He was on bad terms with other ministers, but was favored by the queen. And by her

[12] They are a *thakali,* a *noku,* and five *tharis,* the qualification, rights, and duties of whom will be stated later. Their role seems to correspond to that of trustees (*guthiyars*) as outlined by Regmi (1968:80–87).

advice, the king assigned him the land of present Satepa, of which he became the first settler.[13] For a long time he lived childless and at last adopted a son of his elder sister. But soon after that, a real son was born to him. Therefore he divided the village into halves and gave them to his two sons.

Jyapus were called into the village later on from other settlements in order that they could give service to the Syesyos. The king did not give land to those coming later. But in the course of time, Jyapus acquired land and wealth.

There seems to be some truth in this legend. We can find groups of people who are said to be the descendants of earlier settlers, and they are the very people who have to bear much more responsibility than others. There are cases of recent immigration of some of the groups which are traceable and those new settlers have no obligation whatever in the Jatra.

Even the people who have lived in this village for several generations are still called the newcomers or "not the people of this village," and are also *mathya* in the Jatra. The Joshis, who regard themselves as ritually slightly higher than other Syesyos and are economically quite well off, are not regarded as *thya* in the Jatra, because they are thought of as newcomers and do not belong to any of the "original" Syesyo kin groups. Thus, it is clear that higher status does not necessarily give a group or person the qualification of *thya.*

Though there seems to have been a continual influx of population into this village, it was not possible to ascertain when the first settlement occurred or to determine the definite order of immigration of various groups. But if we proceed along these lines we are led to think that some time after the establishment of the village, later arrivals who were not related to the two sons of the first settler were given the privilege to take part in the Jatra and become *thyapin,* but that after the increase of population, the endowment of *thya* status somehow ceased and those people without any formal connection with the Jatra appeared. Thus, the present division into *thyapin* and *mathyapin* was made. Now let us proceed to the caste description.

Syesyo

As was stated above, most of the formal ritual activities in the Jatra are restricted to *thyapin* of the Syesyos.

Among the Syesyos, people of forty-one households out of the total of sixty-three are *thya*. These forty-one households are divided into five

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But in this village the word *guthiyar* is used only for the members of the *guthis* and not for the people in charge of god's land. There is no collective name which refers to these seven persons.

[13] The place where he first started the settlement was, however, about 300 meters east of the present village site, and up to this day, on the Sinaya day of the Jatra, the palanquin of the goddess Vishnudevi takes a few hours' rest here on the way back from Ba:khu.

maximal agnatic lineages.[14] The residential character of the maximal lineages is still remarkable though not all of the members of a maximal lineage cluster in one place. Members of certain maximal lineages are referred to by the names of their original wards,[15] but those lineages themselves are nameless. Here, for simplicity of description, these will be numbered from I to V and the words maximal lineage will be abbreviated as "ML."

Maximal Lineage (ML-I) contains twenty-one households and is the biggest of all. They claim to be the descendants of the real son of the original settler in the legend. At present, the *noku,* the elder only next to *thakali,* is from this ML-I. In important feasts, the *noku* must be seated next to the *thakali* along with six other elders.[16] He is the one who automatically assumes the seat of the *thakali* after his death.

The Syesyo *thakali* is now from ML-II. This consists of only one household of the Saba Ward, and they claim to have descended from the adopted son of the legendary first settler. In Saba Ward also resides ML-III, which includes five households.

Even among the Syesyo *thyapin,* there appears a difference in rights and duties such as the assumption of the *thakali* seat. Descent is the essential factor in the creation of this difference. As long as members of the above three maximal lineages are living, the role of *thakali* is assumed by the eldest male of these three groups. The other *thyapin* are excluded from the seat of *thakali*.

But the people of ML-IV (with nine households) and ML-V (with five households) are potential *thakali* candidates in a sense that they can take up that role in case all members of ML-I, II, and III are deceased. Moreover, people of these two lineages bear various responsibilities along with the people of the other three.

Among them, *guthi* membership is quite an important obligation and privilege for Syesyo *thyapin*. Members of *guthis* are called *guthiyars* and in each of the four *guthis* of the Jatra of which Syesyos are the members, there are four *guthiyars.* Usually a *guthiyar* is the eldest male member of his own household. The *guthi* membership is inheritable. In many cases, one of the sons of a *guthiyar* succeeds to his father's membership. But

[14] The term maximal lineage is used to indicate the largest group in which agnatic relation is believed to exist. The tie is not always traceable but is expressed in the observation of the worship of the common ancestor deity. Here I refrain from using the term clan because this word has been used by other scholars in a different social context (for example, see Fürer-Haimendorf 1956:21–25; Nepali 1965:159–161). The examination of the usage is necessary but will be done in other places.

[15] "Ward" here is a traditional ward called *twa* (*tol*), and is different from the administrative ward which is usually larger than the former and referred to as *Wada* (probably borrowed from English). When people are called by their own ward names a suffix -mi is used. Thus people of ML-I whose original ward is Hapa Ward are called Hapami.

[16] These are *soku, pyayku, myaku, khuku, mhayku, cyaku,* in order of seniority. They are different from *thari.*

cases of equal division of the right among the brothers can also be observed.

Participation in the common worship and the feast of their own *guthi* is the regular duty of the *guthiyars*, and they have to take yearly turns to prepare and offer a place for the feast, which takes place several times during the Jatra. Expenses for the execution of the worship and the feast are met with the revenue from the land assigned to each *guthi.*

The four *guthis* of the Syesyos are: Silan *guthi*, Mari *guthi,* Mahadi:p *guthi*, and Arati *guthi.*

Silan *guthi* is an organization for the observation of the secret sacrificial worship with *Jugi* of *hom* [fire] held in the early morning (almost near midnight) of Muya day. The Brahman presides over this worship in the presence of the *guthiyars* at Ba:khu Vishnudevi temple. He is paid about twenty liters of unhusked rice and entertained in a feast.

In each of the important ceremonial functions, a man from Silan *guthi* has to join the procession with a long-handled torch in his hand. This duty also shifts from one *guthiyar* to another yearly. Of the four *guthiyars* of Silan *guthi*, two are from ML-I, one is from ML-II, and one is from ML-V. This *guthi* is assigned about 0.2 hectare of the god's land. It is cultivated by two *mohis* who are Syesyos of ML-I, of whom one is a Silan *guthi* member. The latter is said to be the descendant of the donor of the land of this *guthi*.

It is said that all the god's land was donated by ancestors of the villagers. The memory of the donors, however, has become quite vague with the lapse of ages. Even though such memory exists, the descendants of the donors are not in any superior position to other *guthiyars* in the control of the matters of the *guthi* land.

The Mari *guthi*'s role is to distribute *mari* [flattened, unleavened bread] to the people in the name of the goddess. This is done in the Muya evening after the worship of all the groups at the palanquin. Last of all, a worship with the sacrifice of sheep is performed by this *guthi* and many loaves of bread prepared in the house of the *guthiyar* whose turn it is, are distributed among the crowd by the *guthiyars.*

Besides repeated feast responsibilities, this *guthi* has an obligation to entertain six voluntary palanquin carriers in a feast. The Mari *guthi* is assigned about 0.1 hectare of land which is cultivated by two Jyapus. (One is a Jyapu of a nearby village.) Two of the four *guthiyars* belong to ML-I. One happens to be the present Syesyo *thakali* who is of ML-II. The donor of the land is not remembered in the case of the Mari *guthi*. The remaining one *guthiyar* seat is held collectively by lineage mates of ML-V. In this case, the role of a *guthiyar* rotates among all the households of the people of ML-V.

Several years ago, there were three households in ML-V. One of them kept the role of the *guthiyar* for four years continuously and then handed

it to another. Recently, two of the households were divided, each into two. Since then, the undivided household has continued to hold its four-year turns. But each of the divided households split its share in the right of the *guthi* membership into two. Thus, the four newly divided households ended up keeping the role of the *guthiyar* for only two-year terms. In other words, one household has continued to hold one third of the duty, whereas each of the other four is now entitled to only one sixth of it.

Here we can see the influence of the principle of the uniform inheritance on the succession of *guthi* membership. The Mari *guthi* also has to supply one of the five big pots of rice beer for use during the Jatra.

The Mahadi:p *guthi* has the role of providing a big oil lamp — *Mahadi:p* — in front of the palanquin during the worship on Muya day. Just before setting up the lamp, there is a sheep sacrificial worship by the Brahman. Along with a member of the Silan *guthi*, one member of the Mahadi:p *guthi* accompanies important processions with a long-handled light. A feast is held several times, in one of which six voluntary carriers of the palanquin are feasted.

About 0.15 hectare of land is assigned to this *guthi*. A Syesyo of ML-V cultivates it. Three of the *guthiyars* are from ML-I. One of the *guthiyar* seats of ML-I rotates among five brothers who have different households. The remaining one *guthiyar* seat also rotates among the lineage mates of ML-IV. One of the *guthiyars* claims to be the descendant of the donor of the land assigned to this *guthi*. The donation is said to have taken place ten to twenty generations ago, and there is no difference of rights and duties between him and the other *guthiyars*.

The Arati *guthi* is responsible for the preparation of an eleven-armed lamp — *Arati*. At the beginning of the Jatra, on Nyutan day, when the image of the goddess is taken out of her seat in the temple in order to be put in a basket and on the last day when she is returned to her seat from the basket, the lamp must be lighted in the Vishnudevi temple and a worship must be held by the members of the Arati *guthi*.

The function of the Arati *guthi*, however, is not confined to the occasion of the Jatra. Three times a month,[17] the *guthiyars* go together to the Vishnudevi temple and worship the goddess by lighting this lamp. A feast of this *guthi* does not take place during the Jatra, but is held once a year on the occasion of Matatirtha Amai[18] around August.

In this *guthi*, two members are of ML-I, one of ML-II (namely, the Syesyo *thakali*), and one of ML-III. The ancestor of the last is said to be the donor of the land attached to this *guthi*. The land amounts to 0.25 hectare and is cultivated by three Syesyos, who belong to ML-I, II, and

[17] On the days of Sanhu (Sangranti) — the first day of the Nepali month; Amai (Aunsi), New Moon; and Punhi (Purnima), Full Moon.
[18] This is said to be the day of Mother Worship.

III, respectively. In the case of this *guthi* there is no rotation of membership among brothers, but the membership is inherited by one of the sons of each member.

As was seen above, even among the *thyapin* of the Syesyos there is a remarkable difference in the membership of the *guthis* of the Jatra. The members of ML-I and II have more seats than other lineage people, whereas people of ML-IV and V tend to hold seats collectively and rotate them among themselves. As far as is known, the donors of the land of the Jatra *guthis* are all ancestors of those *guthiyars* who belong to ML-I. Thus, unequal distribution of duties is seen among the Syesyos and this again seems to attest to the legendary story on the order of the settlement of various groups.

However, there are roles concerning the Jatra in which a tendency to disperse rights and duties among the Syesyo *thyapin* is seen. The role of the *thari* offers an example.

On Sinaya day, immediately after the return of the palanquin from Ba:khu to the village, a government-sponsored worship called *Sarkar puja* [government worship] is performed in front of the goddess in the palanquin. This is done in the name of the central government, and the government gives the village about thirty rupees for it yearly.

Five Syesyos are in charge of the execution of this worship, and they are called *thari*. *Tharis* are said to have been appointed at the initiative of the government. It was not possible to ascertain the time and the actual process of the appointment of *tharis*. But from the present distribution of the role, we can assume that actual allotment was left in the hands of the village elders, or more specifically the Syesyo elders.

The *thari* role is now assigned to the people of ML-I, II, IV, V, and to one lineage which is not *thya* in the Jatra. The last lineage, however, is not a newly settled one. This is the only lineage among the *mathya* Syesyos which is admitted to the collective worship of the Syesyos on the occasion of the Mohni (Dasain) festival in autumn. Within each maximal lineage, the eldest male member (e.g., the *thakali* of each group) is to be the *thari*. It does not take the form of rotation by household. Without any respect to household division, the eldest male always retains the *thari* seat.

Here, the fact that ML-I has no seat is noteworthy. It can be interpreted that, when faced with the government order to appoint five *tharis*, people of ML-I, then already occupied with other important duties in the Jatra, chose to divide the responsibility which they might have thought as minor among the other Syesyos.

Tharis have other duties. In the morning of Chwelabu, two of them have to go to Ba:khu and give people *chwela* [roasted meat of the buffalo], sacrificed for the Goddess Vishnudevi at Ba:khu, as a blessing from the goddess. Three times a year, in the Jatra, in the festivals of Mohni (Dasain) and Gun Punhi, *Sarkar puja* must be done and *tharis*

have to take care of it. At the time of Mohni, moreover, *tharis* have to serve as waiters in the preparation of meat dishes for the collective feast of the Syesyos.

Tharis also play a secular role. There are customary rules regarding the period for some of the agricultural activities. For instance, after the planting of paddy no villager may begin weeding grass before the day of the feast of Jharkha. In case of an infringement of this rule, the offender has to pay a five-rupee fine to the *tharis*. This applies to every resident of this village including the untouchables. Because of these roles, *tharis* are said to be the big people of the village, but it is the claim of the members of ML-I that they themselves are more important than *tharis*.

Another example of the dispersion of obligations can be seen in the preparation of a big pot of rice beer. It is admired as the god Bhairab and is indispensable in the Jatra. Altogether, five big pots must be prepared: one by the Syesyo *thakali*; two by the two Jyapu *thakalis*; one by the Mari *guthi*; and one by Syesyo *thyapin*. For the preparation of each, about seventy liters of unhusked rice is given from the god's land. The duty assigned to the Syesyo *thyapin* is rotated among them.

In this case, by putting ML-II and III (whose home ward is the same) under one category, Syesyo *thyapin* are divided into four clusters, namely ML-I, IV, V, and II–III. From each cluster, a few persons have to take turns making beer; four persons from ML-I, two from II–III, and three from IV and V, respectively. The role rotates from one cluster to another yearly. Within each cluster the role again rotates from person to person in order of seniority. Thus, to a person assigned in the cluster ML-I, the turn comes once in sixteen years, whereas to one in the cluster II–III, it comes once in eight years.

There is a distinction between those who take up this duty and those who do not. And I am of the view that the determining factor in the distinction is the kinship relationship several generations back. It seems that a minute analysis of the details of Syesyo kinship is necessary for the proof of it but here is no place for it. I think the above description suffices for the explanation of the dispersion of duties among the Syesyo *thyapin* and leave further analysis of this rotation to another occasion.

In addition to these formal rights and duties, Syesyos take part in various informal activities, for they are proud of their status and are quite aware that they are the hosts of the Jatra. Thus, they voluntarily worship many times, get together in the preparation and the disposal of the palanquin, offer music to the goddess, and endeavor to assure the successful execution of the festival.

Barum (Brahman)

Though the Barum (Brahman) in this village is one of the most recent settlers, he is regarded as *thya* in the Jatra because he is asked to conduct a few important worships. In the early morning of Muya, he accompanies the Silan *guthi* to Ba:khu and presides at the sacrificial worship with fire. For this service, the Silan *guthi* pays him about twenty liters of unhusked rice.

In the afternoon of the same day, all the villagers come for worship to the palanquin placed in the village and, among them, some ask the Brahman to perform worship for them. On this day also, the Mahadi:p *guthi* offers the goddess a big torch, and a short worship must be made by the Brahman just before setting up the light. In these cases, the payment for his service is only the invitation to a private or group feast.

The government worship on Sinaya evening requires the presence of the Brahman. For this, there seems to be no payment to him. The fact that he receives remuneration, except for the last, signifies that he is not the member of the host group of the Jatra. He is just a hired worship performer and has fewer duties in the Jatra compared to Syesyo *thyapin*, not to mention the Syesyo *thakali*. Here again, it is clear that mere ritual status is not quite enough to give one a very important position in the execution of the Jatra.

Jyapu

Except for the work of the *thakalis,* Jyapus have few duties in the Jatra. Throughout the Jatra, two Jyapu *thakalis* are occupied with various auxiliary activities. They never act as main performers of any formal worship in the Jatra. They are in charge of preparations for the Jatra; they have to wash the image of the goddess on Nyutan day, put proper decorations at various places in the village, and decorate the palanquin.

They are the caretakers and supporters in all the worships. When villagers come to the temple or to the palanquin for the worship of the goddess, they must be present and take care of them by putting various offerings aside to clean up the place and by giving them flowers, leaves, and rice, etc., as a blessing from the goddess. Whenever the Syesyo *thakali* or the Brahman conducts worship, they must be there and give necessary assistance in the performing of the preliminary worship ceremonies, e.g. putting offerings in front of the goddess, and cutting sacrificial animals (except buffaloes), etc. Jyapu *thakali* (and also their sons) serve also as carriers of ritual goods.

Among the Jyapus, also, there is a division into *thyapin* and *mathyapin,* the former being qualified to the seat of *thakali.* Among the hundred

households of the Jyapus, *thyapin* households number thirty-nine. Jyapu *thyapin* are divided into two maximal lineages. The people of one are called Devimi and the other Jadami, according to their original ward names. There are fifteen households of the former and twenty-four of the latter. For the services in the Jatra, two Jyapu *thakalis* are needed. And *thakalis* of Devimi and Jadami who are regarded as *thakalis* of the Jyapus of the eastern and the western halves of the villages, respectively, are expected to fulfill the duty.

Though both are called *thakali*, the *thakali* of the Devimi is regarded as senior to the one of Jadami and assumes somewhat heavier duties than the *thakali* of all the Jyapus of Satepa. This precedence of Davimi over Jadami and all other Jyapus who are *mathya* is again said to have been determined by the Devimi's earlier settlement in this village. Jyapu *thakalis* are not paid for their work but are allowed to appropriate food offered to the goddess by the villagers.

There is one *guthi* organized solely by Jyapus. This is called the Ga:si *guthi* and serves to supply firewood which is burned in the outdoor fireplace in the village square so that villagers can warm themselves during the Jatra. The Ga:si *guthi* is completely different in character from *guthis* of the Syesyos. Villagers say that it is only an organization for charity whose activity is not obligatory. There is no land assigned to this *guthi*. Its membership is not restricted to *thyapin* and, as a matter of fact, all except one of the eight *guthiyars* are *mathyapin*. Here we can see the informality of this *guthi*.

Once a year in late winter, the *guthiyars* come together for the cutting and gathering of firewood. On that day a feast is held once. During the Jatra, they get together for three days to enjoy feasts. But in contrast to the *guthis* of the Syesyos, Jyapu *guthiyars* have to bring food for the feast themselves. On Muya day before putting fire to the wood they pay homage to the goddess by sacrificing a sheep, which is again supplied by themselves. The Jyapu *thakali* of the Devimi is here asked to perform the worship for the *guthi* (of which he is not a member).

In this way we can see that the Jyapus' responsibility in the Jatra is much lighter than that of the Syesyos.

Duin

All Duins except for two households of one lineage are *thya* in the Jatra. The people of the *mathya* lineage came and settled in this village only about sixty years ago and have no kinship relationship with other Duins in this village. Those who are *thya* are of one maximal lineage which comprises eight households.

Duins are needed in the Jatra as the carriers of the rice-beer pots and

miscellaneous ritual goods. In every important worship, at least one male from each *thya* household is required for this work. As a reward for their services, Duins are assigned a little land (0.04 hectare) collectively. The land is cultivated and appropriated by their *thakali*. The *thakali*, however, cannot bequeath it directly to his sons, but his lineage mate next in seniority is the heir to the right in this land.

Kau and Saymi

Both Kau and Saymi are newcomers to this village. They have lived here less than twenty years, and are not *thya* in the Jatra. They only join in various types of worship voluntarily.

Nay

Nays are indispensable in the Jatra as well as in other ritual matters, as messengers, ushers of the procession with music, and as killers of buffaloes in sacrificial rites. They are also busy as butchers, slaughtering buffaloes and supplying meat for the villagers' use during the Jatra.

As messengers, young men of the household of the Nay *thakali* shout around the village with small drums and cymbals to inform villagers when and where a certain important event is going to take place. Thus, almost every evening during the Jatra, the high tone of their drums can be heard at every corner of the village. They are called upon for such other purposes as notification of an announcement from the government, of the opening of a village meeting, or of the mobilization of village people for the collective village labor, etc.

Nays have to usher important processions in the Jatra with the music of drums and cymbals. This is not restricted to *thyapin* only. Those Nays who are fond of and good at music can perform this service.

On the contrary, in the sacrifice of buffalo, only *thyapin* are requested to take part. Thus in the sacrificial rite held at Ba:khu on the morning of Chwelabu, eight Nay elders must be present, kill a buffalo, and offer its blood and meat to the goddess.

There are Nays of ten households of one maximal lineage who are *thya*. One of them lives in a nearby village but still is regarded as *thya* and continues to cooperate in most of the ritual matters with the Nay *thyapin* who live in Satepa. The priority of kinship relation over locality is shown here. The remaining seven households of the Nays in the village are *mathya* and have no obligation in the Jatra.

There is no land assigned to the Nay. And as a reward for their service Nay *thyapin* are given raw meat of the buffalo which they slaughtered.

Jugi

The Jugi is regarded as *thya* in the Jatra, and a Jugi man has to assume the role of bringing *sina tika* to Ba:khu when the buffalo sacrifice is done. Every important procession must be preceded by a Jugi blowing a *mwali* [bugle]. However, there is no male Jugi resident in Satepa, and since women are not regarded as proper in formal ritual matters, brothers of a Jugi woman are invited to the village to help her by taking her place.

The reward for the service of the Jugi is given from the revenue of 0.04 hectare of the god's land which is set aside for this purpose and is cultivated by a Syesyo, who submits a portion of the harvest to the goddess.

Castes from Other Settlements

PAI. A family of a caste called Pai (Pahari) living in a distant village (three hours' walk) has the hereditary obligation to send a man twice a year to Satepa for ritual purposes (e.g., for Sithi Nakha day and the Jatra). It is not clear how and why the Pai, who are not members of this village, came to take part in its festivals. There is no tradition that the Pai had lived in Satepa before.

Pai is regarded as a little lower than Jyapu ritually. In the Jatra, a Pai man mainly works in support of the Jyapu *thakalis.* He helps them wash the image of the goddess on Nyutan day and Sulan day. He is a night watcher of the goddess when she is placed outside of the temple during the Jatra. And when the buffalo is to be sacrificed he accompanies the animal from the village to Ba:khu. Besides, it is his special duty to walk in front of every procession of the Jatra holding a straight sword, which is regarded as a symbol of the ancestors of the Syesyos.

He stays for four days in the village during the Jatra. For his services he is given around ninety liters of paddy yearly from the god's land.

PO (PODE). When worship is carried out in the Ba:khu Vishnudevi temple, the untouchable Pos from Kirtipur come to clean up the place just after the worship. They can take whatever is offered and left there. They also come to Satepa seeking a reward. The Jyapu *thakalis* give them leftover rice beer and buffalo meat.

ASPECTS OF CHANGE IN THE JATRA ORGANIZATION

The above-described organization of the Vishnudevi festival of Satepa shows us that the Syesyos and, above all, the *thyapin* among them are by

far dominant in carrying out the ritual matters in it, including the control over land put aside for the occasion. Other castes including the Brahman have only subordinate roles.

This structure of the dominance of the Syesyos, however, does not always remain stable. In recent years, there has been a trend for lower castes to resist overtly this Syesyo rule.

It was stated above that the duty of the *thakali* is almost the only formal activity of the Jyapus in the Jatra. But until recently, namely, up to 1967, the Jyapus provided another service. It was giving a performance on a musical instrument called *kan*, a long pipe more than two meters in length, which produced a monotonous low sound. There are nine *kans* and a dozen Jyapu *kan* players.

The nine *kans* had to be blown for six nights in the Jatra including Nyutan night and five nights of the main Jatra period. As main processions and worship in which they were to take part should be carried out all through those nights, the performance was regarded as quite a laborious duty. Also, at the time of the Mohni festival and at the funeral of the Syesyos and the Jyapus it was the custom for the *kans* to be blown by them.

The mode of payment for the duty differed from that of the other duties. The players were given rice and *baji* [pounded rice]. Every household of the Syesyos and the Jyapus had to offer about 1.1 liter of each at the time of the Jatra and the Mohni as payment. In addition, a considerable amount of money was given from the income from the god's land as the training expense of the players. Thus, in 1967, 600 rupees were disbursed. The Mohni *guthi* used to give them about 230 liters of paddy and 50 rupees yearly. For their service in the funeral, only three paise was offered from the house of the deceased person.

From the year 1968, the Jyapus ceased to offer the music of the *kan* altogether. One of the reasons given for this withdrawal was that they could not bear the hard labor, but the most essential reason was said to be the election of the *pradhan panch* [headman of the village *panchayat*].

When the new *panchayat* system was introduced in the Nepali year 2027 (1960–1961), Satepa and the neighboring village Siba were united into one administrative unit, namely, the Satepa village *panchayat*. In the election[19] of the *pradhan panch* held in the following year, a Jyapu man of the Devimi in Satepa was elected. As most of the population (about 800) of Siba village are Jyapus, it can be supposed that in that election, the Jyapus of the villages Siba and Satepa got together and brought victory to him.

The next election was held in 2023 (1966–1967) and a Jyapu from Siba village was chosen *pradhan panch*. This, however, was not the result of cooperation between the Jyapus of Siba and Satepa. Rather, the Syesyos

[19] All the men and women above twenty-one years of age are given suffrage.

of Satepa cooperated with the Jyapus of Siba and supported a Jyapu candidate from Siba and defeated the former *pradhan panch*. The reason they gave for this action of the Syesyos was that they could not tolerate the corruption of the *pradhan panch.* But this may not be the only reason.

We can suppose that the Syesyos who had long held their superior position in the village life felt that their position was threatened in the political field and their feelings of caution and antagonism to the Jyapus who had begun to acquire power increased. As the Jyapus in Siba did not have any authoritative position and the daily contact between the Satepa Syesyos and them was rather scarce, there was little chance for antagonism to grow between them. And to the disadvantage of the Syesyos, it was not possible for them to have their own *pradhan panch,* because they were a minority even within Satepa, not to mention the Satepa village *panchayat.*

Therefore in the second election the Syesyos, solely out of antagonism towards the Jyapus of Satepa and the intention not to allow the seat of *pradhan panch* to go to them, decided to support the Jyapu candidate from Siba and succeeded in driving the former *pradhan panch* out of office. The Jyapus of Satepa became extremely indignant and made their attitude of opposition to the Syesyos overt, the most symbolic manifestation of which was the withdrawal of the *kan* music.

Yet the pressure of the tradition to carry out ritual matters properly was still strongly felt by the villagers, and an endeavor to restore order was made. Just before the Jatra of 2027 (1970–1971), a village meeting was held in order to resume the intravillage cooperation at least for the Jatra. The Satepa villagers reached an agreement to support a common candidate in the next election, and as a result, in the evening of Nyutan, performance on the *kans* was restored by the Jyapu players, but it was the first and the last performance of the *kan* in that year.

The condition of the agreement was turned down as illegal by the *pradhan panch* (then a Jyaput in Siba village). In addition to this, both the Syesyos and the Jyapus in Satepa had been very discontented with the result of the choice of the candidate and were seeking a chance to annul it. Therefore, under the pretext that the *pradhan panch* intervened in the affair, they easily canceled the agreement. Never again was the *kan* played in the Jatra.

This is not the only example of intercaste antagonism. The opposition of the Nays to the Syesyos could also be seen in the Jatra. During the distribution of buffalo meat after the sacrificial rite on Chwelabu morning, the Syesyo *thakali* was seen to scold the Nay elders that they had taken too much. To this, one of the Nays stood up and shouted that the Jatra was not only for the Syesyos but for all the villagers, and the Nays, too, were justified in taking their proper share and threatened that if the right

were denied, they might stop their service in the sacrificial rites. After this quarrel, the Syesyo *thakali* grumbled, "Who is the god? You Nays have grown to be the god, not us!" The same kind of complaint that the Jyapus have become too big can be heard from many of the Syesyos.

Thus we can see that the traditional dominance of the Syesyos has been defied by the other castes to some extent. At least we can say that lower castes have gained the self-confidence to claim their own right in the face of the Syesyos.

SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION

In the preceding sections, by taking the Vishnudevi festival as a typical example, we have seen that among the castes in Satepa there exist economic, ritual, and social differences. Also, it was shown that there were differences in access to rights and duties within each caste, and it was asserted that these originated mainly from the precedence of settlement in this village. Hence, descent was thought to be an important determinant. Order of seniority was another key to the distribution of ritual responsibilities.

By comparing the rights and duties of various castes, we can say that the Syesyos are dominant in village ritual matters, all the other castes including the Brahman being subordinate to them. However, this intercaste structure has been experiencing change. The Jyapus, and to a lesser extent the Nays, have begun to show their opposition to the Syesyos.

Here, in a brief discussion, let us consider this sociological phenomenon from two aspects:

a. What are the factors that brought change? and

b. What significance do the structure and change of this society have in the theoretical framework of the caste system, and what prospects are in store for the future of this society?

a. When asked why the Jyapus withdrew the performance of the *kans*, the Jyapus themselves and even the Syesyos are unanimous in saying that the election was the greatest reason. Here, the case offers a close parallel to those reported from various places in India. The introduction of the system of election has had the effect of giving much more political power to caste groups larger in population.

The collective action of each caste is preserved rather well, although there might be some opposing faction within a caste. Though the case in Satepa is modified and made complex by the existence of another village under the same jurisdiction in the village *panchayat,* those characteristics are still observed clearly. But is the election a decisive reason for the breakdown of cooperative intercaste relationships?

Let us take the case of the Nays. They are by no means strong in number nor privileged in the hierarchical framework of the caste system. Yet, despite their handicaps, they were seen to express their antagonism to the Syesyos overtly. It may be easy to say that hostility among different castes is always inherent in the caste system and finds expression sporadically.

But in this society, there was a tradition that lower castes were more subordinate to the Syesyos before, especially in giving service in ritual matters, and the reason for the gain of power by the lower castes must be explained. My hypothesis is that what played the greatest role is the economic factor. As was stated in the beginning of this paper, opportunities for employment outside the village have been increasing in recent years. This undoubtedly has lessened the need for economic interdependence within the village.

Though it was not possible to trace the yearly change in the number of agricultural laborers and tenants in this village, we may be justified in assuming that the landless people who had worked as agricultural laborers changed their occupation and became coolies or other manual laborers in the capital. As a result they were freed from subordination to the landed people. Many of the Nays may fall in this category.

For the landed, also, there has been a substantial change since, as briefly noted in describing the god's land, agricultural production has almost doubled during the last several years. Consequently, medium-sized landholders have grown self-sufficient and less dependent on other landholders. Larger landholders have become more able to sell their surplus crops and earn cash. Impersonal ties with the outside world have increased, and this has had the effect of lessening the amount of intra-village interdependence. In turn, this has produced a tendency toward individual independence within the village.

Increases in communication and education are other factors that strengthen this trend. One Jyapu, in expressing the feeling of resistance toward the Syesyos, said "We are not ignorant any more, we learned many things from the city people and the radio, and we have realized that it is unnecessary for us to be always obedient to the Syesyos." This statement shows that ideas from the outside world have been influencing the social view of the villagers significantly.

When people became better off economically, more independent, and conscious of their position, they saw that it was time for the Syesyos' dominance and privilege supported by tradition to become targets for attack and their own subordinate jobs to be relinquished. In this light we can interpret the entanglement in the election as having triggered the outright display of antagonistic attitudes and actions.

It is clear that not a single factor but multiple factors have contributed to the change of the social structure of this village. It may be noted in

passing that those factors are mostly brought about by the policy of the new government that assumed authority in 1951 after the fall of the Rana regime.

b. As for the continuity of castes and the caste system, Satepa's case has something to offer us. At this point of social change, the degree and nature of the change are distinguished on three levels. First, intercaste cooperation and interdependence are in a process of collapse. Here, intercaste antagonism plays a significant role in destroying the relationship.

Second, at the same time, the intracaste cohesion seems to be increasing. The complex intracaste social structure itself is thought worthy of preservation and is slow to disintegrate. The need for votes in the election is a big factor in this regard. It is felt to be easiest to depend upon one's castemates for votes, and this adds to the traditional intracaste cohesion.

Third, the caste ideology — notions of hierarchy and contamination and the regulation of endogamy and commensality — seems to have been preserved without significant change.

Thus, by distinguishing the three levels, we can see more clearly the changes in the caste system in this village. The trend of the caste system is toward separation. The caste ideology will remain strong, and, for the time being, the system itself may appear to have been strengthened because of the strong feeling of cohesion within each caste. But we have to note that the caste system without dense intercaste relationships (toward which this society is proceeding) must be interpreted as totally different from a caste system with such relationships. The structural interdependence between intracaste cohesion and caste ideology is a powerful factor in preserving both of them, and it still seems that it will take a long time before the castes as social organizations collapse.

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A Descriptive Analysis of the Content of Nepalese Buddhist Pūjās *as a Medical-Cultural System with References to Tibetan Parallels*

WILLIAM STABLEIN

That nature is systematic or thought to be so by man is of crucial importance, but it is even more important that different cultures structure nature according to their own projections. In the case of the Newars and Tibetans of Nepal, whose life-styles have their roots in the *vajrayāna*[1] Tantric Buddhist tradition, one cannot help but notice a hierarchically systematic view of the universe which is reflected in the ritual and community processes. When destructive forces plague the community in the form of physical, mental, and social diseases, it is as if a unit of the system is deviating or damaged and needs to be controlled or repaired.

The control center is the ceremonial circle which is a symbolic reality of the *vajrayāna* Buddhist's universe and is believed to have the potential power to correct the ills of mankind.

Like a computer the ceremonial circle is useless without a programmer. The programmer is the *vajrācārya* [hierophant],[2] who feeds the circle with the proper information, i.e., the request of *samkalpa* [intention] to repair or control. Actually, the donor of the ceremony (*pūjā*) requests the hierophant to request the divinity's presence. When the donor touches the hierophant's own personal *pūjābandha* [brass pot] at the beginning of

I want to thank Mr. Manavajra, Vajrācārya of Kathmandu, for his expert help in my study of Buddhist tantra. I also appreciate the friendly and scholarly suggestions of Dr. Christopher George and Dr. Alexander, University of Washington.

[1] In the context of this study, *vajrayāna* tantric Buddhism refers primarily to the traditional Newar Buddhist community of Kathmandu, Nepal. *Vajrayāna* means the way of the *Vajra*. *Vajra* designates an ultimate value that the Newar and Tibetans put on the universe. After a thing is ritually purified to its utmost, it is *Vajra*. Thus the goal of the *vajrayāna* Buddhist is to exist in the state of *Vajra* body, speech, and mind.

[2] We should understand that the *vajrācārya* is one who presides over the internal *pūjās* (*adhyāmikapūjā*) which are performed in the private *āgama* [chapels] of every Newar monastery (*vihāra* (Newari) *baha*). The chapels are maintained by a social organization called *guthi*.

the *pūjā*, this triad — donor, hierophant, and divinity — is formed into a bond. The triad represents the basic hierarchical structure, i.e., the projected divinity, the hierophant, and the community.

Our first unit then in the medical-cultural system is the symbolic vertical pathway in time and space that leads to the unity between the hierophant and the divinity, which is ideally represented in the Tibetan system by a *tshog.shin* (Tibetan) [sacred tree], on which dwell the tutelary deities, Buddhas, the sacred community, the projectors, and the sacred books.[3] The neophyte is asked to project into this visual aid all his friends, relatives, and enemies so that all may benefit from the transfer of the *amṛta* (Tibetan, *bdud.rtsi*) [curing ambrosia][4] that is believed to be taking place between the divine hierarchy and the sentient beings, via the hierophant. As enemies are also included it is a kind of therapeutic sacred jurisprudence without actual encounter.

The *samkalpa* [intention] of the *pūjā* becomes an *āvāhana* [call] for the projected divinity to descend in the *kalaśa* [flask] (Figure 1e). The call is symbolized by four *mudrā* [hand gestures] and four syllables: *jaḥ, hum̐, vam̐, hoḥ*. The *vajrayāna* hierophants, never ones to cling only to the outer projection, have an inner projection as well, which takes the divinity to the lower part of the abdomen which is likened unto a flask. Hence, there was a famous Tibetan lama in Nepal called the *bum.can* (Tibetan) [flasked one].

The essence of the tree is the *bīja* [seed], which has an empty center from which the divinity is imagined to grow. Thus in the Tibetan ceremony the divinity is sung to arise from the inside pith that is empty *stoṅ.par.gyur.pa'i.naṅ.ňid.las.* (Tibetan). The hierophant then must first of all project the *śūnyatā* [emptiness] onto the ceremonial circle from which the divine tree will grow and rain its curing *amṛta* [ambrosia].

Because of the efficacy of the ambrosia, according to the indigenous conception of health, the community emulates and mimics the divine as much as possible. Indeed, the divinity has its own hierarchy, but it is projected on the basis of the community. In the center of the sacred tree there is the supreme *vajradhāra* [*Vajra* bearer], the *iṣṭadevatā* [tutelary deity] sits below, and surrounding the tree at the bottom are the *nātha* [protectors]. These three can be likened unto a seed: the center, the embryo, and the protective layer, respectively. It is believed that the divinities are actually not different from each other in essence, which at least is known and realized by most hierophants. They are like water

[3] The *tshog.shin* is visually represented by religious paintings. Although they are Tibetan, Newars also use them as reverential objects in *pūjā*. The *tshog.shin* is also mentally visualized. I am using it as an example of the vertical pathway of the sacred. There are other models, such as the *mandala*, in three dimensions, the Nepalese pagoda, the *chaitya*, or even the body itself.

[4] All foreign words are Sanskrit except those marked Tibetan or Newari.

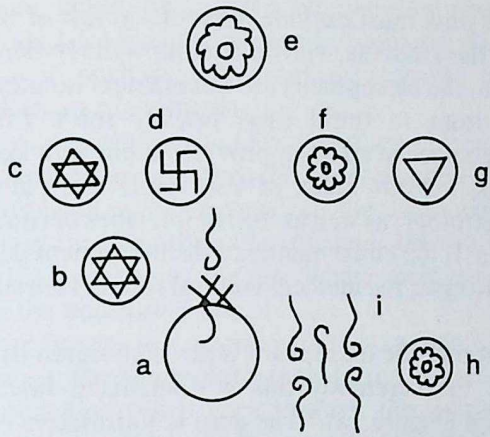


Figure 1. The Ceremonial Circle of the *Kalaśa* [flask] *Pūjā*:
a. *Gurumandala* [of Guru Vajrasattva]
b. *Samādhibalimandala* [of food offerings for the divinities to produce the curing ambrosia]
c. *Krodhaganabalimandala* [of food offerings for the group of wrathful divinities]
d. *Dadhipatramandala* [of the pot filled with curd]
e. *Kalaśamandala* [of the main divinity's flask]
f. *Nāgabandhamandala* [of the divine serpent's flask]
g. *Dīpamandala* [of the light]
h. *Pañcagavya* [the five substances of cow]
i. *Dikpālabali* [food offerings for the protectors in space]

being poured into water. Water which is in the flask, then, is a perfect medium in which to project the divinity.

When the hierophant realizes the presence of the divinity, he offers water for its *arghapādya* [feet], for *ācamana* [sipping], and for *prokṣaṇa* [cleaning]. In internal *pūjās* that are conducted secretly, the *mulācārya* [main hierophant], who is dressed in the costume of the divinity, is treated with the same respect. Among the Newars in ancient times and even now among the elders, water offerings are made to guests. The host hopes in turn to receive something from the guest who will feel obligated. Indeed, it is a model subliminal contract that is the foundation of many personal relationships. The water offerings thus reflect the etiquette of the community. Once the divinity is invited, the hierophant can transfer the curing ambrosia to substances, objects, and individuals.

The second unit of the medical-cultural system is the *vajrācārya* [hierophant] himself which includes a projected structural arrangement within the body called *vajradeha* [*Vajra* body]. The hierophant as a member of the social elite is significant. The Newar hierophants are first of all bound by a castelike consciousness which is symbolized by their inner *pūjā* performed in the sacred *āgama* [chapel] which is located in every Newar monastery (*vihāra* [Newari] *baha*). As the participants share boiled rice and other food out of the same pots during the ceremonial

proceedings, the *pūjā* must exclude most of the rest of the Newar community. Among the Tibetans, who do not follow the Indian model of caste as the Newars do, the hierophants are nonetheless isolated and educated from birth in order to fulfill their priestly roles. Like the Newar hierophants, their special training provides them with skills for reading the sacred texts, various kinds of contemplation, painting, dancing, medicine, and astrology, as well as the complexities of ritual arrangement and performance. If the elitist quality of the hierophant declined through social or other changes, the medical-cultural system I am suggesting could not exist.

It is important that the hierophant is not considered as separate from the divinity. In the ceremony this is dramatized first of all by the *gurumandala pūjā* (Figure 1a).[5] The guru is Vajrasattva (whose being is *Vajra*), symbolized by the mythical Mount Meru, in the center of the *mandala* surrounded by the continents of the world. The hierophant imagines the whole world is within this *mandala* which he projects as an offering. As such he imagines his own body as guru Vajrasattva himself, and no matter where he goes he is conceptually in the center of the universe which is symbolized by his self-*prādaksina* [circumambulation], i.e., he simply turns around with his hands folded.[6]

The education and training of the hierophant may be significant for the existence and maintenance of his *vajradeha* [*Vajra* body] which is the main dynamo of the system. The *Vajra* body is the model system of three nerves (Bharati 1970:175, 292): *lalanā, rasanā*, and *avadhūtī*, which are located in the left, right, and middle parts of the body respectively (Lessing and Wayman 1968:327). With these nerves there are five *cakra* [circular arrangements within the head, throat, heart, stomach, and genitals]. The main function of this unit is the sacred procreation, i.e., the creation of the *bodhicitta* [sacred semen].[7] This in turn emanates the transferable *amṛta* [ambrosia]. This is the salient feature of the perfect concentration *pūjā (samādhipūjā)*. Symbolic of this *pūjā* is the double triangle in the shape of a six-pointed star (Figure 1b) that one will find in almost every monastic courtyard, standing for the union of *upāya* [means] and *prajñā* [insight]. On top of the double triangle is offered some rice, on top of which is placed an earthenware pot on a tripod filled with cooked

[5] The *gurumandala* is performed at the beginning of every community *pūjā*. The *pūjā* I am offering as a model is the *kalaśa pūjā* [flask *pūjā*] illustrated in Figure 1, which in turn is incorporated into larger ceremonies, such as the marriage ceremony, and so on.

[6] Spatially, this is probably the smallest distance circumambulated by members of any community.

[7] Professor Bharati writes that, "Anthropomorphically the *bodhicitta* is the mind of each living Buddha, as of each enlightened person" (Bharati 1970:293). The rendering "sacred semen" fits the actual function of the unit. The nonhierophants, both Newar and Tibetan, do not understand *citta* (Tibetan *sems*) as having anything to do with semen; however, the hierophants have no qualms about making the analogy. The *amṛta* [curing ambrosia] is dependent upon the creation of the *bodhicitta* [sacred semen].

rice, garlic, meat, beans, beer, and a blue and red flag designating the wind and fire *mandalas* that are imagined to cook the contents of the pot. The food is then, through an audiovisual yogic process, projected into the transferable element of ambrosia.

Because the main divinity and his consort are outwardly projected to couple within the food and produce the *bodhicitta* and ensuing ambrosia, the process is referred to as *baliyoga,* i.e., the union within the offerings which generally occurs near the end of the *samādhipūjā.*[8] Before the food is hypostasized into ambrosia, the hierophant must create it within himself. I call this the ambrosia cycle.

Briefly, the ambrosia cycle begins with the creation of the divinities in union with oneself. The whole world is projected as the body, speech, and mind of the divinities which goes through the following audiovisual transformation: the world as body, speech, and mind → (changes to) moon *mandala* → *hum* → the coupling divinities, from whom issues the sound of *suratasabda* [enjoyment]. This changes the above world into a sacred *mandala,* which now is cycled back into the mouth of the divinities and emanates again as *bodhicitta* [sacred semen]. Then the sacred semen → *bījasvarūpa* [seed having is own nature] → *bījāksara* [sound of the seed] which divides into a red and white *hūm* (1) → *hum* (2) → *ham* (3) → *sira* [head] (4) → *ardha-candra* [half moon] (5) → *bindu* [dot] (6)[9] and lastly dissolves to only sound which is first loud, then soft, and finally vanishes (7). This is the peak moment of the hierophant's contemplation:

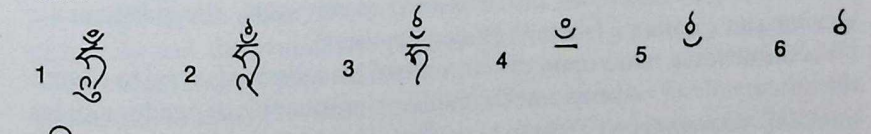
[8] Among the Tibetans, the union of the male and female which is pictorially represented in religious paintings is understood as the biological and vegetative procreative energies of the existence, which are projected as sounds inside the *Vajra* body. That it is actually the sexual act itself is taken as a kind of joke. The Newar hierophants who are married, however, feel that it is an intrinsic part of the *sādhana,* but even among them it is not a topic of discursive reasoning.

[9] A similar process is beautifully performed by the *bkaḥ rgyud pa* sect in the invitation (Tibetan *spyan.ḥdren*) of *Mahākāla.* The performance is called *āh hūm,* partly illustrated in the following way (in Tibetan musical notation):

Notice how it goes from heavy lines to light and even lighter (manuscript: *dpal.nag.po. chen. po.yab. yum.hkor.dan.bcas.par.byed.paḥi.rdo.rjeḥi.glu.dbyan*).

Similarly, notice the numbers 1 to 7 illustrating the gradual dissolution from the bottom upwards to emptiness in the syllable *hum.*

Thus:



He has refined the sacred semen to the quality of sound which can be transferred to objects, substances, and individuals.

In this way especially we should understand the efficacy of the *bījamantra* [seed syllable.]. The *samādhipūjā* then informs us that one of the qualities of perfection that the hierophant must achieve is the perfection or *Vajra* nature of sound. In the *samādhipūjā* all the sounds of the Sanskrit alphabet referred to as *Ali* for vowels and *Kāli* for consonants are projected onto the *Vajra* body, and are then synthesized into the seed syllables *oṁ, āh, hūṁ,* the matrix of the universe of body, speech, and mind. The seed syllable is cast into the substance which cultivates the sacred tree into a living symbolic reality for those who have *bhakti* [faith], have taken *saṁvāra* [vows], and hence have access to the *samayasattva* [pledged beings] on the sacred tree.

The third unit contains the fundamental elements in the community that the projection and flow of the *amṛta* [curing ambrosia] are dependent upon. In fact, without the elements *bhakti* [faith], *saṁvāra* [vow], and *samaya* [pledge], the traditional structure of the *vajrayāna* community, whether Newar or Tibetan, could not exist.

Saṁvāra [vow] presupposes *bhakti* [faith] and is a determinant of the *samaya* [pledge]. The simple model is the *nityapūjā* [continual *pūjā*] where the devotee approaches the image with faith, makes his five ordinary *pancopahāra* [oblation offerings], and then takes in return (usually from the hierophant) some *samayavastu* [substance] which is eaten and produces the cure. The substance is a pledged substance by virtue of having been pledged to the divinity by an individual who has the *saṁvāra* [vow], i.e., the vowed person gives off pure things. The unvowed person or the wicked person emanates impure things.

An example among the Tibetans of how substances take on qualities outside of themselves is the concept of *sdig.zas* (Tibetan) [sin food] as opposed to *dsm.zas* (Tibetan) [pledged food]. To dine at the same table with a thief is to take on the qualities of a thief. Sharing food with a respected member of the community leaves one with a feeling of having bettered one's moral being. To share food with a hierophant is tantamount to an actual act of purification, *sbyoṅ, ba* (Tibetan). And to be given *dam.rdzas* (Tibetan) [pledged substance] is to be given *sman* (Tibetan) [medicine]. Occasionally one hears the term *dam.rdzas* (Tibetan) used for gifts exchanged between friends which designates a bond of loyalty far beyond the exchanging itself.

When pledged substance is shared in the course of an initiation ritual where vows are taken, or in the course of any *pūjā,* the participants become *rdo.rje.spun* (Tibetan) [*Vajra* brothers].

As the devotee relies upon the strength of his *saṁvāra* [vows] to ensure the efficacy of the ambrosia medicine, the hierophant is dependent on his *samādhi, tiṅ.ṅe.ḥdzin* (Tibetan) [perfect concentration] to ensure the

flow of the ambrosia. The effort of the *vajrayāna* community is to make its daily efforts in the context of the vow. The hierophant protects the *samaya* [pledge] that the community relies upon for health and social stability.

The fourth unit of the medical-cultural system is substances: substances to purify, to offer, and to use as curing remedies. In all *pūjās* above and to the right of the *gurumandala* (Figure 1i) there are *bali* [food offerings] and *gojā* (Newari) [rice cakes] included which have the function of attracting the protective divinities of *dikpāla* [space]. The hierophant offers the five *pañcagavya* [substances of cow] (Figure 1h): milk, curd, butter, feces (substituted by honey), and urine (substituted by sugar). The protectors are invited to stand sentinel near the *gurumandala.* Eight flowers are placed around the *mandala* to represent their presence. More eatables are then offered for the ten *daśakrodha* [wrathful deities] on the second six-pointed star (Figure 1c). It is usually considered that the directional divinities nail the wrathful ones in their places. A pot is filled with *dadhipatra* [curd] and set on a swastika (Figure 1d) drawn with the *sindūra* [powder of red lead] which stands for the four *caturbrahmavihāra* [holy dwellings], i.e., friendliness, detachment, joy, and compassion. The main flask should not be confused with the divine serpent flask (*nagābandha* [Figure 1f]).

The *nāga* [divine serpent] must be propitiated in every *pūjā*, for he is thought to have power over rain and to be the progenitor of certain diseases such as *pidika* [boils] and *ślipāda* [elephantiasis].

The *dīpa* [lamp] (Figure 1g) suggests the *raśmi* [rays] of the divinity that disperse the dark clouds of ignorance. Thus when devotees enter temples which always have burning lamps, they will hold their hands and faces over the fire to receive the *raśmi* [rays] of the divinity. Another light is used (not shown in Figure 1) for a special *nīrājana* [light purification]. A wick is placed in an earthenware dish that contains mustard seeds, which are the standard substance for nullifying forces of *bhūta* [disease], flowers and water which clean the *klesa* [defilements], three balls of rice that designate the dedicating of one's merits to all sentient beings, and the dish itself, symbolizing the removing of the cover of ignorance. The light is waved in front of the flask where the main divinity is thought to dwell.

Āñjana [ointments] are well known in *vajrayāna* literature. A surviving remnant of this tradition is the giving of *tika* [dot on the forehead]. Hence the hierophant carries with him a small *tika-bandha* [double-cupped vase] with the powder of yellow pigment in one cup and the *sindūra* [powder of red lead] in the other, these represent the *upāya* [means] of the male principle and the *prajñā* [insight] of the female principle, respectively. Mixed together and pressed first onto a pledged object and then onto the forehead, it signifies the transfer of ambrosia. Ointment in the *Mahākālatantra* is called the *yoga* [joining] of the two principles (*bola* and

kaṃkola) that produces flavor of oneness. Another form of ointment is *kajjala* [lampblack]. At the beginning of internal *pūjās* a wick doused with oil is placed under a pot where the lampblack is collected. At the end of the ceremony, after the hierophant reads the signs left by the lampblack inside the pot, the participants are given a *tika*. The women take the pledged lamblack and apply it to their eyes. The Indians now produce commercially a special *kajjala* [lampblack] that can be bought in any Nepalese or Indian general store.

Among the Tibetans the most popular pledged substances that are given out for curing are *guṭika, ril.bu* (Tibetan) [pills]. They are made from Ayurvedic substances that become pledged in the process of *pūjā*. The pill, being defined both as the union of body, speech, and mind, and as the sacred semen of the divinity, gives us a practical example of yogic medicine. In fact, the pill is an analog of the whole world in a refined state and is a symbol of what the medical-cultural system of the *vajrayāna* Buddhists is all about.[10]

In summary, the medical-cultural system of the *vajrayāna* communities in Nepal, which may indeed apply to all those Asian communities that have not undergone a radical modernization, includes the following units: (1) a vertical system such as the sacred tree, with its divinities that function simultaneously in space and in the *Vajra* body of the hierophant, from whom arises a projected field of *amṛta* [ambrosia]; (2) the hierophant who calls the divinity into his *Vajra* body and plants the ambrosia by means of the seed syllables; (3) the community which assembles in *pūjā* to pay respects to the sacred hierarchy, reaffirms their *saṁvāra* [vows], and shares in the sacred feast; and (4) the substances themselves that carry the *amṛta* [ambrosia] to the devotees and the community at large. The *pūjā* system, like any medical system, seeks to control, repair, and prevent suffering.

If correcting the suffering of the community is the main function of medical-cultural systems, and if currently existing *pūjās* reflect the contents of classical tantric texts, then indeed the latter will prove to reflect such a system.

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[10] While making pills out of certain substances with the uttering of seed syllables, "one will be emancipated from disease (*nad.grol*), obtain ordinary magical powers (*mchog.mthun.dṅos.grub.thob*), immortality (*chi.med*), and move in the sky (*mkhah.sbyod.du.ḥgro*)" (manuscript: *ñe.bar.mkho.bahi.rdzas.sna.tshogs.kyi.śbyar.thabs.lag.len.ci.rigs.bstan.shel.gyi.ḥphren.ba.gzugs.so*).

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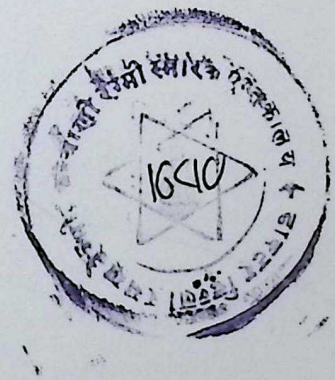

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